MARTA OF THE LOWLANDS

ANGEL GUIMERÁ

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MARTA OF THE LOWLANDS

Catalan: Terra Baixa
Spanish: Tierra Baja

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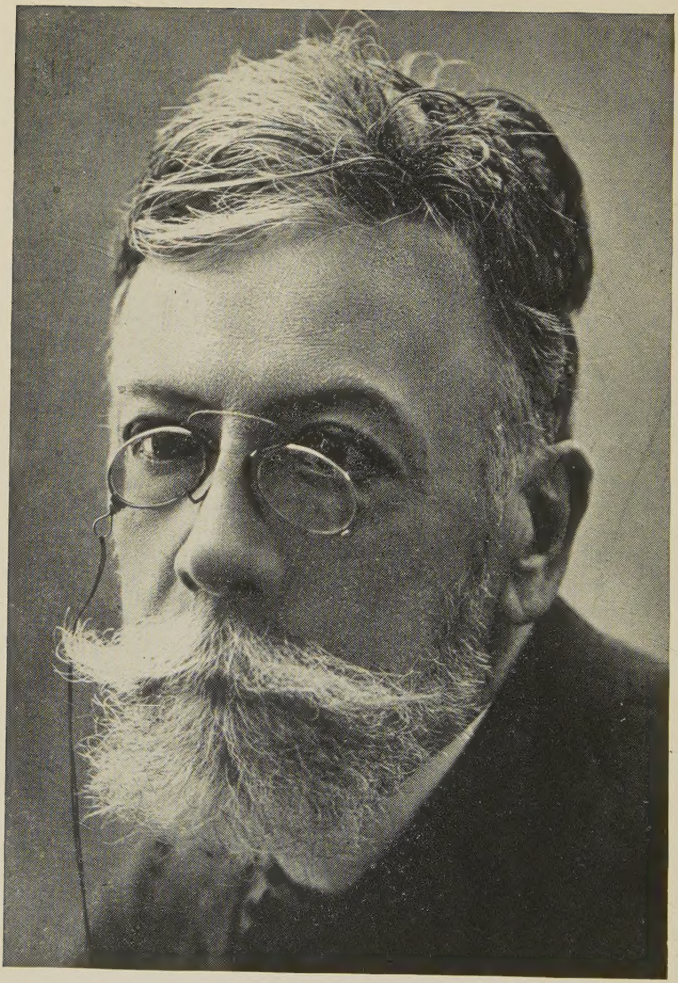

ANGEL GUIMERÁ

MARTA OF THE LOWLANDS

(*Terra Baixa*)

A Play in Three Acts

BY

ANGEL GUIMERÁ

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Withdrawn

TRANSLATED INTO SPANISH BY

JOSÉ ECHEGARAY

AND INTO ENGLISH BY

WALLACE GILLPATRICK

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

JOHN GARRETT UNDERHILL

GARDEN CITY NEW YORK

DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY

1914

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"THE WOLF"

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(16174)

INTRODUCTION

If he is to appear in a proper perspective, Angel Guimerá must be considered in a double aspect — first, as the chief and best-known modern representative of a literature by no means at all well known, and, secondly, as one of the most forceful, most resourceful, and most masterful of the dramatists of our time.

The Catalan language is one of the Romance family to which the neighbouring French and Spanish also belong. Like them it derives from the Latin, but its closest affinity is with the Provençal. The mediæval troubadours overran Catalonia and Valencia quite as they did their own Provence, and Catalan attained its greatest development shortly afterward, during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, at the hands of Ramón Lull and Ausíes March. The union of the Spanish Kingdoms under Ferdinand and Isabella and the House of Hapsburg, reduced the language to a position little better than that of a dialect by the beginning of the last century. Its status in

Barcelona and the surrounding provinces might be aptly compared to that of the Gaelic at the same period in Ireland. About the year 1840 a systematic effort was inaugurated to restore it to its former position and use, more especially as a literary language — the language of the ancient dukedom of the Berenguers. Verdaguer and Soler were the chief names in the earlier days of the revival — the latter in the drama. With the lapse of years they gave way to writers such as Ignacio Iglesias and the painter-poet Rusiñol, but the first and foremost of them all, by right of seniority now as of achievement and reputation, is Angel Guimerá.

Angel Guimerá was born in Santa Cruz de Tenerife in the later forties. His father was a Catalan. When seven years of age he was taken to Barcelona, and while still young associated himself with the Catalan literary movement. All of his writings are in that tongue. Spanish he speaks with a sense of constraint. There are to-day large numbers of people, not only in the country districts of Catalonia but also in the cities and even in the capital of Barcelona itself, to whom Spanish is a sealed book. For many years these persons were without any means of literary expression, whether through the

printing press or upon the stage. Scholars neglected their tongue; the government discouraged its growth. The autocratic and repressive tendencies of the centuries preceding the Napoleonic upheaval had made for its debasement to the plane of the vulgar and socially unfit. Guimerá's first plays were therefore acted before societies of amateurs in and about Barcelona; there was no place for them upon the commercial stage. A local organization known as *La Gata* had been formed in the year 1864 by Frederich Soler, which presently became metamorphosed into the *Teatre Catalá*, or Catalan Theatre, the purpose of which was the encouragement of drama in Catalan. Performances were given in various playhouses of the city which were secured to meet the immediate needs. At length a home was found in the *Teatre Romea*, situated in one of the older and least desirable sections of the city. In this house many of the principal productions of the new movement first saw the light. The capacity of the *Romea* soon proved too small, and the *Teatre Catalá* was transferred to the *Novetats* on the Paseo de Gracia and subsequently to the *Teatre Principal*, a vast house, by far the largest auditorium to be found in the province.

An audience had now been created for the Catalan drama. An undertaking which had been purely altruistic in its inception had been put upon a firm financial basis, and other and independent Catalan theatres, more mercenary in character, were spontaneously springing up. Yet such an enterprise could not have been successful had it been merely a matter of the stage. A generation of philologists and grammarians had swept away the old ignorance and prejudices and brought the sanction of learning to the popular speech. A Catalan daily press was appealing to a wide circle of readers. Finally a persistent and at times virulent separatist and anarchistic agitation cast a political hue over the whole movement, endowing it with a passion and vitality which were in no sense academic. The Catalan revival was a far cry from the Provençal, under the gentle ministrations of Frédéric Mistral. There lies between them more than the border province of Roussillon.

In all these activities Guimerá had a part. For many years he has maintained the most intimate relations with Pere Aldavert, editor of the sometime separatist periodical *La Renaixensa*, at whose press his plays and poems have been published. But he

has not associated himself with, nor has he felt great sympathy for, the extreme radicals of the left — of the Ferrer school. Few cities in Europe have suffered as much from the more unpleasant and flagrant features of a somewhat sordid liberal propaganda as Barcelona has done, in the attempt to acclimatize the spirit of French trade-unionism without, however, domesticating its salutary checks and restraints. Guimerá has opposed these excesses. A short distance from his door, in the Plassa del Pi, is the office of publication of *La Escena Catalana* ("The Catalan Stage"), the organ of the theatre of which he is the acknowledged head. Here all his works are to be found on sale, together with the portraits of those who have become famous upon his scene. Here, too, is the rendezvous of his followers — the younger writers of his school. This is the organization which he has built up. Under the very shadow of the beautiful church of Santa Maria del Pi, so representative of the past ages of Catalan architecture and art, the new spirit stirs — how different, indeed, from the old which lies sleeping behind the mellowed façade at its door! Guimerá's democracy is a democracy of character. His endeavour has always been to appeal to the highest and best in the nature of his

countrymen, to point out the evil, to distinguish the good, preparing by a sure development for the approach of that day when his people shall be free, if not in name and in form, yet none the less in fact, as the future shall determine in its season because the preparation has been complete.

The most obvious analogy to the Catalan is the Irish literary revival under the direction of Lady Gregory and Mr. Yeats. But the most notable achievements of the Irish have been to date the historical and legendary reconstructions of ancient material at the hands of Lady Gregory and Dr. Hyde. The Abbey Theatre is still in the experimental stage. The Catalan has attained its majority. Its history might well be a Bible to those of similar faiths. It has produced in Enrich Borrás the foremost realistic and tragic actor of Spain, and in Margarida Xirgú the most distinguished and popular of its younger actresses. Yet this fact is not in itself so remarkable. The creation of a theatre is not beyond the powers of a far-seeing, gifted, and resolute man. On the grand scale the feat had been accomplished in Spain before by Lope de Vega. Other theatres whose resources have been limited and the technical average of whose performances has not been very

high, have nevertheless been the cradle of great actors. The fact which is remarkable is that a poet whose first efforts were enlisted in the cause of a movement which was purely artificial should have become without sacrifice either of purpose or of ideals, and without diminution of sincerity, perhaps the most practical and technically proficient of the dramatists of to-day.

It is not necessary to proceed very far into the theatre of Guimerá to perceive the source of his power and the nature of his gifts. He is a man who is singularly simple and sincere — direct to the point of bluntness. Keen, quickly sensitive almost to melancholy under the burdens of time, he is equally incapable of partisanship or of denying his beliefs. These qualities are in some degree evident from the beginning. To them is joined a singularly vivid, emotional, imaginative force — wild, fierce, abrupt, livid as the bare nerve, flaming up suddenly and illuminating whole scenes as by the direct light of truth, seemingly summoned from nowhere, prepared for and dependent upon no artifice of the playwright's stock, yet at the same time more effective than them all because so patently true. This is the hallmark of his genius. He is a supreme master of situation

— not the carefully constructed, calculated climaxes alone, which are brought about through scenes of elaborate preparation, although in these he asks no odds of the best; these are the mere craftiness of a Scribe, the laborious experience of a Sardou. Guimerá, when his mind is alight, goes straight to the heart of the situation which presents itself, whether trivial or involved, and lays bare the dramatic moment in its essence and intense reality, to be perceived instantly by the spectator as just and true. This is his distinctive endowment. Certainly no living writer has possessed this gift in so striking a degree.

Shakespeare was his first master. In the field of character as well as in the romantic drama he has remained his model ever since. It is not difficult, however, to trace the leading of other hands. There is the influence of the school of Hugo and Scribe, as of their counterparts the Spanish romanticists, of whom Zorilla is the best known. At their feet the young Echegaray also sat. Guimerá's apprenticeship was served in the poetic drama. His earlier plays are written in blank verse, a form which is uncongenial to Spanish though easily possible to Catalan, in which the distinctive effects of the English metre may be obtained. As employed by him,

it is simple and rapid in movement, displaying even in his youth few lyrical tendencies. The superfluous word is anathema. Verse of this sort is not to be translated with advantage from the straightforward, rugged Catalan into sonorous, redundant Castilian.

Although economy of attention was later to be recognized by him as the cardinal dramatic principle, there is a certain incoherence in these first plots, a want of orderly and compelling progression, a defiance of restraint. Defects of this nature were not uncommon in the plays of the time. But there was also discernible from the outset a feeling for the vivid and striking scene such as marked a writer of more than ordinary promise. *Gala Placidia* was his first work, but the most celebrated which belongs to this period is *Mar y Cel* ("Sea and Sky"), whose success established his reputation not only in Catalonia but throughout Spain. It is his chief lyrical performance. In its portrayal of the traditional conflict between the seamen of the eastern littoral and the corsairs of Algiers the treatment is more rhapsodic than usual, and is suggestive of its descent in the legitimate line of the classic Spanish drama of the golden age of Lope de Vega and Calderón. Translations have been made into several languages including English, but

no English performances have taken place. More representative plays are *L'Anima Morta* ("The Dead Soul") and *Lo Fill del Rey* ("The King's Son"). Here that extraordinary and characteristic command of imaginative detail and suggestion are already seen. *Las Monjas de Sant Aymán* ("The Nuns of St. Ayman") is a perfervid romance in which Peter the Hermit appears as one of the leading characters, breathing the very spirit of the mediæval times.

The production of *En Pólvora* (1893) marks the adoption of a new manner. Verse is exchanged for prose. The chief interest is no longer patriotic nor romantic but sociological. Pólvora is the working man. The influence of Ibsen becomes predominant. The play is a play with a purpose, dealing with the industrial problem, and as such created at once a profound impression. As in most writing of the kind there is a certain contradiction between the thesis which the author has to propound and what would otherwise have been the natural course of the story. The element of didacticism was uncongenial to Guimerá's mind. With a single notable exception it does not reappear; the realism remains, and upon it he now concentrates his attention. *María Rosa,* is the play in which we first encounter

the writer of international reputation. It reveals an intimate knowledge of the life of the people, a penetrating sympathy for the poor. It establishes Guimerá as a consummate craftsman in the minute, in the welding together of the apparently inconsequential into the most momentous effects. The chance remark attains in his hands the significance of the killing of a Scarpia. He is, as Manuel Bueno has pointed out, an insuperable master of environment, of setting the scene, of all the arts of the colourful and picturesque. With these is blended a complete command of theatric situation as it is ordinarily understood, of the climax, the "big" scene, and all the paraphernalia by which these things are made to appear important and real. If the former was the poetic this is the theatric period. It culminates in *Terra Baixa*, known in English as "Marta of the Lowlands," a play which combines in greater degree than any other the various aspects of his genius. In strength of action, human sympathy, imaginative illumination, and realistic detail it is thoroughly typical.

Like *María Rosa*, *Marta* is a tragedy of condition, and so in a sense of fate. The action is a dumb pleading for the helpless and unfortunate who are

of necessity particularly exposed by the organization of society to the blows of chance. It is in this way, and not through the promulgation of any system or theory, that Guimerá's work may be said to be sociological. Marta and Manelich are the peasant and the labourer coming into opposition with arbitrary power, typified in Sebastián the lord. In the conflict which is here posited, the significance of the drama lies. Other plays excel *Marta* technically; the monologue still remains as a heritage from the poetic day, to be discarded in the succeeding plays, *Aygua que corre* ("Running Water") and *La Pecadora*. Besides these tragedies, there are a number of comedies of local customs and country life dating from this time. There is also some farce.

The last phase is that of the rejection of theatric device. Guimerá had already shown in *María Rosa* how to write compelling drama with a paucity of situation but convincing solution. He had long been able to secure the maximum effect without reliance upon any adventitious aid, depending solely upon the natural opposition of character and upon adroitness in the point of attack. He now dispenses with elaborately compounded structure and takes his scenes as they are suggested by the natural un-

folding of his subject. A simple event or a single happening suffices for an act. The sailor returns from over seas to sit down at the table with those at home — a chance gathering, that is all; but it is the first act of *Sol Solet* ("Lonely and Lone"). These people live. Without any striving for effect the scenes are as dramatically presented as any upon the stage.

For some time Guimerá had enjoyed a considerable popularity in Italy, and it had come about that a number of his plays had been adopted into the repertory of the Sicilian peasant players. One of them, *La Pecadora*, was prominent in a gross perversion upon the European and American tours of Grasso and Mimi Aguglia. The method of these Sicilian players was an extreme naturalistic sensationalism, which further was that of the native plays which they chose to present. The original impetus had been imparted to the peasant drama in Italy by Verga in his *Cavalleria Rusticana*, a combination of melodramatic situation and naturalism after the procedure of the old formulas. With the lapse of time the naturalistic element was greatly accentuated by Luigi Capuana of Catania in *Malia*, as subsequently by his followers in the imitations which that play

called forth. Signor Capuana has pointed out that there is a tendency among the peasant actors to regard their stage as a training ground and stepping stone to something higher. Mimi Aguglia, having, it was said, acted Duse off the boards, passed over to the Italian theatre when she had acquired a sufficient technique. This was the opposite of the course of Guimerá. He came to the peasant theatre an expert in the "well-made" play. The great prizes of the drama had already been his. In abandoning the entire mechanism of points, *scènes à faire*, necessary climaxes and the like, he consciously puts aside the attempt to be theatrically sincere and seeks out a truer and freer means of expression. He surrenders these husks of things to his art. When the history of the peasant play comes to be written, he must be accounted among its first masters. No other writer has brought to it an approximation of such skill.

Several works which stand outside of the general canon are deserving of more than passing mention. In *Lo Camí del Sol* ("The Pathway of the Sun") he has given in his maturity a highly coloured account of the exploits of the mediæval Catalan soldiers of fortune in the Levant. He has composed some of the most effective of modern romantic melodramas.

Jesús de Nazareth is a presentation of the life of Christ upon the stage. His latest production is *La Reyna Jove* ("The Young Queen"), a theatrical tract in the interest of republicanism, which has attained a wide vogue. There are also two volumes of verse, *Poesías* and *Cantas a la Patria* ("Hymns to my Country"), besides a volume of occasional prose.

Guimerá's reputation must ultimately rest upon his dramas, although it was as a poet that he first became known to the public. He has been a familiar figure in the civic life of Barcelona ever since. He was a competitor in the *Jochs Florals de Barcelona*, or Floral Games of Barcelona, in 1875, and two years later carried off the three awards, of patriotism, faith, and love, which are the prizes of these poetic festivals as they have been revived since the middle of the last century in imitation of the Consistory of the Gay Saber of the troubadours, imported into Barcelona from Toulouse in the year 1393. Guimerá became *Mestre en Gai Saber*, and in 1889 President of the Floral Games. He is the first of the Catalans to break through the limitations of an obscure local tongue and to carry the new literature of his countrymen beyond the boundaries of Spain. His plays have been translated into more than twenty languages.

In 1909 a great demonstration in his honour took place in Barcelona, where a statue of the shepherd Manelich, hero of "Marta of the Lowlands," was unveiled in the Park of Montjuich as a tribute to his fame. With the translation of this play he is now introduced to English and American readers.

JOHN GARRETT UNDERHILL.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

It has been said of Guimerá that had he elected to write in Spanish, instead of in the provincial Catalan, he would have been earlier recognized as one of the greatest dramatists of modern Europe. It may as truthfully be said that any one of his plays, when translated into another language, immediately wins enthusiastic recognition for his genius. While Guimerá has chosen as the medium for his prodigious achievement, both in poetry and the drama, the language employed in but one of the provinces of Spain, his work is distinguished not by an essentially regional but rather by a universal note. He possesses the cosmic, or world, spirit; his plays are charged with the passions, sorrows, failures, triumphs of the whole human race. The Catalan people claim descent from the ancient Greeks, and their pretensions are apparently justified in their art, especially of the theatre, and more especially in the plays of Guimerá.

"Marta of the Lowlands," the first of the Guimerá plays to be rendered in English, came to the American theatre by way of Mexico. When Galveston was suffering the horrors of earthquake and flood, Mexico's leading actress, Virginia Fabregas, and her husband and leading actor, Francisco Cardona, desiring to offer a benefit for the stricken American city, honoured the writer by consulting him in the choice of a play. "Marta of the Lowlands" (*Terra Baixa*) was chosen as a work whose virile theme and treatment would attract an audience including members of the English and American colonies.

It was due to the presence in the audience that night of Mr. Guido Marburg, formerly an actor in our theatre, that the play eventually reached the American stage. Mr. Marburg appreciated its possibilities, immediately secured the rights from the author, and asked the writer to undertake the translation.

"Marta of the Lowlands" was produced in English by Mr. Harrison Grey Fiske at the Manhattan Theatre, New York, in 1903. It was rehearsed and staged by Mrs. Fiske. The part of Marta was first entrusted to Coronna Riccardo and later to Fernanda Eliscu. Hobart Bosworth played the rôle of Mane-

lich. The following year it was played throughout California and the West by Florence Roberts, with Hobart Bosworth, Melbourne MacDowell, and Lucius Henderson successively as Manelich. The play was revived by Mr. Fiske in 1907 for Madame Kalich with Henry Kolker as Manelich. And in 1910-1911, Martin Harvey and his wife and leading actress, Nina de Silva, used the play en tour throughout Great Britain, preferring for it as title, "The Lowland Wolf." The play has been seen in France, Germany, Italy, Servia, and in South America. In Spain the leading rôles were created by Maria Guerrero and her husband, Fernando Diaz de Mendoza. Its theme forms the basis for the opera of d'Albert entitled "Tiefland."

In the stage version of "Marta of the Lowlands," the soliloquies and most of the asides have been cut. It being the proper office of a translator to render a foreign work as faithfully as may be, the play is here printed in its entirety.

W. G.

MARTA OF THE LOWLANDS

(*Terra Baixa*)

Act 1

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA

MARTA, peasant girl
ANTONIA, peasant woman
PEPA, a peasant woman
NURI, a child
MANELICH, a shepherd
SEBASTIÁN, a landed proprietor
TOMÁS, an innkeeper
MOSÉN, an overseer
JOSÉ
NANDO
PELUCA
MORRUCHO } Farm labourers

ACT I

SCENE: *A mountainous region of Catalonia in Spain. The action occurs in the entrance-hall or court of a mill-house in the country; on the right a small door leads to a bedroom; on the left there is a large fireplace; at back of stage, on the left, a small door, covered by a cretonne curtain, is gained by a short flight of steps; at back of stage, right, a large door, through which are seen the distant mountains, with rocks and trees; the mill is in this direction; a small shed is visible; toward the right of stage are scattered milling implements, sacks of wheat, etc.; in front of the fireplace there is a pine table, with an unlighted lamp upon it, and surrounded by plain wooden chairs.*

TIME: *Early afternoon. When the curtain rises,* MORRUCHO *is discovered sifting wheat.*

MORRUCHO. What does it matter whether the wheat's clean or whether it ain't clean? It belongs to the master. What do I care?

Enter PEPA *with a small basket of kidney beans.*

PEPA. Good afternoon.

MORRUCHO. Here they are! The partridges!

Enter ANTONIA.

ANTONIA. Hello, Morrucho!

MORRUCHO [*indifferently*]. Hello!

PEPA. We've come to keep Marta company. It doesn't seem possible, does it? And the mill close to our house, too! If we didn't come —— [*Suggestive look*]. Isn't it so?

MORRUCHO [*still sifting*]. That's so!

ANTONIA [*calling out*]. Here we are! Come out, woman!

MORRUCHO. I don't think she'll come: so if you came to pry about, you may as well be off.

PEPA. Be off, eh? We'll see! [*Seats herself and begins shelling beans.*] Help me, Antonia.

ANTONIA [*in a low voice*]. Ask him about the wedding.

PEPA. Wait!

ANTONIA. Go on!

PEPA [*raising voice*]. Say, Morrucho, will she marry or not — Marta?

MORRUCHO [*without noticing her begins humming*]: "At the door of the church, the bride is waiting . . ."

PEPA. Answer, man! Will she marry or will she not marry?

MORRUCHO. Answer yourself! Will you marry or will you not marry?

ANTONIA. What's that to you?

PEPA. You'll see when the time comes!

MORRUCHO. The fact is you're both gettin' on — how old are you now? Tell the truth!

ANTONIA [*much annoyed*]. We're just as old as we want to be.

MORRUCHO. You wish you were, you mean.

ANTONIA. We ——

PEPA [*controlling her temper*]. Come, let's shell these beans.

MORRUCHO. Yes, shell 'em — shell 'em!

PEPA. Listen, Morrucho! We didn't mean anything.

MORRUCHO. Nor I, either. "Will Marta marry?" you asked, and I ask, "Will you marry?" And I ask it for your own good, so the breed of partridges won't die out — that's what they call you — the partridges; because — see here — your oldest brother, José, married, and in four days he was a widower; and Nando, or Fernando, is a bachelor still. And you two both old maids! So if Nuri don't marry

when she's a little older, the breed of partridges will be lost — [*he begins sifting and laughing*] — and it would be a pity.

PEPA. You're mad because you couldn't marry Marta! That's what's the matter with you!

MORRUCHO [*singing*]: "At the door of the church . . ."

PEPA. Yes, sing — now you've swallowed your rage! When Marta's father died, you said to yourself, "Now I'll marry Marta, and I'm the miller."

MORRUCHO [*singing*]: "At the door of the church . . ."

PEPA. You have precious little shame, Morrucho.

MORRUCHO. Every man has as much shame as other people will let him have.

NURI *comes in, knitting a woollen jacket.*

NURI. I've shut up my turkeys for the night. May I come in?

ANTONIA. Come in, child!

NURI. Well, you always fight me when I come to see Marta — that's why I asked — and Marta cares more for me than you do.

PEPA. Will you be quiet? Gabbler!

NURI. Pepa, take up the stitches in this jacket

for me. I was runnin' and they caught on some briars.

PEPA. Look! She calls this a jacket!

NURI. It is a jacket!

PEPA. Well, well, stop your gabbin' and tell us about it.

NURI. What have I to tell?

PEPA. What did we send you to the inn for? Muttonhead!

NURI. Oh, yes — but the innkeeper wasn't there. His wife was, though. She told me such things — what things she did tell me!

ANTONIA [*with interest*]. Well — well?

NURI. Well, she told me — "All this that you see — all belongs to the Master Sebastián: the house you live in (she meant ours), the inn, the mill, the farmhouse, all belong to the master."

PEPA. Well! That is news!

ANTONIA. And didn't she tell you anything else?

NURI. Indeed she did! Wait till I remember! She said if I walked and walked until to-morrow, every mite of ground I walked over would belong to Master Sebastián. I catch a bird — I must let it go, because it's the master's. If a lizard runs across my path, I mustn't smash it with a rock, because it's

the master's. If I see a fish in the river, I mustn't try to catch it, because if I hook it by the gills, it's just the same as if I hooked Master Sebastián!

ANTONIA. What stuff!

PEPA [*angrily*]. It was Marta's wedding we sent you to ask about! Stupid!

NURI. But it's only four days since Tomás and his wife came, and they don't know anything about Marta's wedding.

PEPA. Where was Tomás?

NURI. Oh! he had gone to look for the shepherd.

ANTONIA. What shepherd?

NURI. Why, the shepherd! The one who is comin' from far off to marry Marta to-night.

PEPA. To-night! Do you hear, Antonia?

ANTONIA [*wagging her head*]. I thought as much!

MORRUCHO [*returning to his work*]. Now they know.

PEPA. And who sent Tomás to fetch the shepherd? It was Sebastián. No?

NURI [*unwilling to answer*]. Let me alone.

ANTONIA. Answer, child! If you don't ——

NURI [*petulantly*]. Well, it was the master — your master, and mine, and Tomás's, and Marta's. They will be married because he wants them to be,

and because he is the master. [*Offers yarn to* ANTONIA.] Hold this yarn for me!

ANTONIA [*to* MORRUCHO]. You didn't want us to know!

[MORRUCHO *laughs.*]

PEPA. Well, now we know, and we'll go to the wedding if we burst.

MORRUCHO [*to* NURI]. Hoity-toity!

NURI. Well, I — I knew Marta belonged to the master, and that when he told her to marry, she would have to marry.

PEPA. What is the child talkin' about?

NURI. I say I knew it, because one day I heard it; but I didn't tell you what I heard, because I was ashamed. I don't know why, but I was.

ANTONIA. Tell us — what was it?

PEPA. Yes, tell us!

NURI. Well, listen! One evening I was in the woods with my turkeys, and I saw Master Sebastián and Marta comin' up the path. They didn't see me. They were walkin' along slowly and Marta was cryin'. And she said, "I know I must always belong to you" — [*she imitates the plaintive voice of* MARTA] — and the master said, "And I belong to you, even if you marry, and I marry." [*She imitates*

the gruff voice of SEBASTIÁN]. Do you hear? How funny! Marta — well, of course, every one knows she belongs to the master, like all of us; but the master said *he* belonged to Marta! I can't understand that; can you?

PEPA [*significantly*]. Didn't I tell you, Antonia?

ANTONIA. Well, didn't I know it?

MORRUCHO [*shaking his head*]. Even the children must have a finger in the pie!

NURI. But will you tell me how the master can belong to Marta?

MORRUCHO. Hush, child!

NURI. Well, don't you know? And if you do know, why shouldn't I know? She belongs to him, and he belongs to her — there —— It's a worse tangle than this old yarn!

MORRUCHO [*he puts finger to lips and in a warning tone*]. Hush! Marta!

[*They think* MARTA *is coming from within the house and turn in that direction; but* MARTA *comes in the entrance with head bowed, and, on seeing the women, enters the house quickly.*]

ANTONIA [*seeing her*]. Look! She came from the mill! I thought ——

PEPA. Let's see what she says when she sees us! [*Calling.*] Marta!

ANTONIA [*sneering*]. Sayin' her prayers!

PEPA [*calling*]. Marta! Marta!

ANTONIA. We are waiting!

PEPA. What's that to her?

MORRUCHO [*going toward the mill*]. I wish I had your tongues between the millstones.

PEPA [*calling*]. We're goin' to your wedding. Ain't you glad?

NURI [*delighted*]. Oh, yes! Then I shall see how people act when they get married!

ANTONIA. We must tell José and Nando!

PEPA. Here they are now!

JOSÉ *and* NANDO *enter from without, with farm implements, and greatly excited.*

JOSÉ. We know all about it!

NANDO. They're to be married to-night — everything very secret — the papers, the priest, everything.

PEPA. Well, I guess we know it, too!

JOSÉ. We knew it before you did. Peluca told us.

ANTONIA. We knew it before you did, for Nuri told us.

PEPA. And the innkeeper's wife told her.

NANDO. And the innkeeper himself told Peluca.

PEPA. Who? Tomás?

NANDO. Tomás.

ANTONIA [*in a warning voice so the others will speak softly*]. Marta's in there makin' herself pretty.

JOSÉ [*lowering his voice*]. They can't fool me! The master's been huntin' a husband for her for a long time; but he couldn't find one. They both wanted a man who would be like a dumb brute — more so than any of us — but they couldn't find him.

PEPA. Go on!

ANTONIA. Go on, José!

[NURI *listens attentively in wide-eyed astonishment.*]

JOSÉ. Well, Tomás the hermit, who is always sayin' or doin' the wrong thing, told the master — not meanin' any harm — that he knew a lad, a shepherd, who had lived all his life up there in the mountain of the Cabreriza, among the goats, and that he was soft as dough. When the master heard him say that about Manelich — that's the shepherd's name — he began to laugh, because he already knew him. Manelich's herd belongs to Sebastián. Well, the

next day the master went up there, and that's how it was settled that Manelich should marry Marta. And he's goin' to marry her to-night.

ANTONIA [*scornfully*]. He must be without shame.

PEPA. Like her! She hasn't any shame.

NANDO. He's a brute — an animal! He's never seen anything in his life but goats — hardly ever a man — and a woman —— Why, he's never laid eyes on one, outside of his — [*lowering voice*] — they say his parents were goats!

PEPA. So, Marta's the first, eh? Well, he's seen a good one!

ANTONIA. Indeed he has!

NURI. You shan't talk so! Marta is good and she loves me! One day she kissed me and cried, and she said when she was little she was just like me.

PEPA [*disdainfully*]. Like you!

ANTONIA. She wishes she was!

NURI. No, not like me, but perhaps she wishes she was like you, Antonia!

ANTONIA. Be still, you simpleton!

PEPA [*to* JOSÉ]. Go on, tell us the rest!

JOSÉ. There's nothin' more to tell. When Tomás was on his way to the mountain, he stopped at Peluca's house to take a drink, and told him all

about it: Peluca has told everybody; and when they least expect it, they'll find the whole town at the wedding. And now you know it all.

PEPA. Tomás is in fine business!

NANDO. Yes! The old man don't know anything about Sebastián and Marta; he's only been at the inn four days.

ANTONIA. Well, I'll tell him!

JOSÉ. Yes, do! Talk! Talk! And the master will take away our house and our land!

PEPA [*to* ANTONIA]. You'll keep your mouth shut!

JOSÉ. The master is always right!

NANDO. That's why he's the master!

JOSÉ [*in explanatory tone*]. We — are beasts!

PEPA. Well, you may be ——

ANTONIA. Who are you callin' beasts?

JOSÉ. The ones I'm lookin' at ——

NANDO. That's it! The ones he's lookin' at!

[*All begin talking angrily at the same time.*]

NANDO [*warningly*]. Sh-h-h! Here comes Marta!

MARTA *comes from door on right.*

MARTA [*imperiously*]. Out of here — all of you!

PEPA. Yes — we know all about it, Miss!

MARTA. Go!

JOSÉ. We came to ——

[MARTA *catches up the basket of beans and throws it out of the door.*]

MARTA. Go home!

ANTONIA. My beans! What a tiger!

PEPA. Well! That's a nice way! And you're not the mistress, either!

MARTA. Go, and go quickly!

ANTONIA [*begins to pick up the beans*]. Pepa, help me with these beans! She's on her high horse!

PEPA [*to* MARTA]. We're goin' — we're goin' — you're in a fine temper for your wedding day!

MARTA [*aside*]. I wish to see no one!

NURI [*going toward her*]. Not even me — Nuri?

MARTA. Yes — come here — give me a kiss! [*Kisses her, weeping.*] Now leave me! [*Pushes her gently away.*]

NURI. Poor Marta! She's very unhappy! [*Putting her hand to her cheek.*] Why, my cheek is all wet!

They all go out, NURI *looking back at* MARTA.

MARTA [*alone*]. I'm not crying! Why, it's years since I've cried! I thought I'd forgotten how! [*Pause.*] I ought to have told Sebastián I would not

marry that man — that he should not drive me to church with him! [*Pause.*] Yet, why not? I'm nobody! For him less than nobody. For Sebastián, I have been a beast, nothing more! Oh, my mother! Can you see me now? I must marry! And I must marry! Why can't they leave me alone? I want to be alone — yes, alone — now that I can weep again! But if Sebastián saw me — he would strike me, as he did before! [*Changing tone.*] He doesn't want me to marry — but there's no other way — except to turn me out —— [*With exultation.*] Oh, if he would! To be free — free from this awful life! [*With depression.*] But he never will! I'm bad! If I were not bad, I would have run away long ago — or drowned myself in the pool. But I'm a coward! [*Listens.*] Who's that? Perhaps it's Manelich! I won't see him! [*She goes in house.*

NURI *comes bounding in, followed by* TOMÁS, MORRUCHO, PEPA *and* ANTONIA.

NURI. Tomás is coming!

TOMÁS [*entering*]. Ay! How tired I am!

MORRUCHO. Ain't the shepherd comin'?

TOMÁS. He's on the road. If he ain't, it's because he can't find any one to mind his goats.

So, you can tell Marta, and ring the bells for the wedding

NURI [*excitedly*]. I'll tell her!

MORRUCHO. Let her alone! She'll come when she gets ready.

TOMÁS [*chuckling*]. When I think of it — that it was I who made this marriage, I'm as happy as ——

ANTONIA. And is Manelich happy, too?

TOMÁS. Happy? The poor lad's as happy as if he'd just been born.

PEPA. Well, I've heard he's a perfect clown!

ANTONIA. A blockhead!

MORRUCHO [*aside*]. I'll tell Tomás!

TOMÁS. Who told you so? Manelich is — is — an angel; he's better than — white bread — with a — with a heart of butter — and a pair of arms — to strangle a man — the same as they would a wolf — and the same as they did a wolf!

NURI. Oh, I know he's good — and pretty, too!

PEPA. Be still, child!

ANTONIA. But tell us about your journey!

TOMÁS [*delighted*]. There's nothing to tell! I got there at daybreak, and when I found myself safe in the corral, among the sheep and the goats, I began to sing. Then the dogs began barkin', and Manelich

came runnin' out with his gun. When he saw me, he jumped for joy. He's more in love with Marta than ——

NURI. When people are in love they jump — but how do they get in love?

TOMÁS. Dear child! It's a thing that ain't taught in the Bible nor in school! You'll learn it some day — all by yourself! Manelich didn't know — but he knows now! All day long he's talkin' to Marta!

ANTONIA. What's that? Marta went up there?

PEPA. The bold thing! To run after him!

TOMÁS. No, no! You don't understand at all! Manelich has named a goat "Marta," and he's always talkin' to her. It's Marta here and Marta there, and the poor thing knows her name and runs to him. Those goats know a heap!

PEPA. Did you ever? The fool!

ANTONIA. That's what the master wants — a fool!

TOMÁS. There, there! It's time the boy was here!

NURI. Let's go and meet him!

[*All turn toward the gate.*]

ANTONIA. Come on!

NURI. Hurry! [*They go out.*

MORRUCHO. Tomás!

TOMÁS. What is it, boy?

MORRUCHO. Say! Were you never here before — honest?

TOMÁS. No, son! Why?

MORRUCHO. Nor at the master's house?

TOMÁS. No! I was workin' a piece of land for Sebastián's uncle — over there near the city; but I had to quit. I'm gettin' old! Sebastián gave us the inn — the wife and me — for us to live in.

MORRUCHO. So! Then you don't know anything?

TOMÁS. What about, son?

MORRUCHO. Why, the weddin'!

TOMÁS. Speak plain, lad! I don't understand you.

MORRUCHO. All right, I will! If Manelich is a fool, as they say he is, he oughtn't to marry Marta. If he ain't a fool, and has some pride about him, much less.

TOMÁS [*chuckling*]. The trouble with you is, lad, you envy him!

MORRUCHO. Envy him! I wouldn't have Marta if she was covered over with gold! And I'll tell you

something else, in case you don't know: I'm lookin' for another master. You're makin' a nice mess of it between you!

TOMÁS [*getting angry*]. What do you mean?

MORRUCHO. If you don't know Marta's history, learn it!

TOMÁS. Marta's history? Tell it to me!

MORRUCHO. It's short enough! Marta was a little thing, beggin' on the road with her father — or a man who said he was her father. Sebastián took them in, and gave the old man the mill. He's kind hearted, is the master!

TOMÁS. It was an act of charity, evil tongue!

MORRUCHO. A fine act of charity! Don't the whole world know that Marta and Sebastián — eh — now do you understand?

TOMÁS [*excitedly*]. It's not true! Get out of here, evil tongue!

MORRUCHO. Evil tongue, eh? I see you have a hand in it — that's what I see!

TOMÁS. I have a hand in it? You say that?

MORRUCHO. Yes! That's what I say!

TOMÁS. Mischief-maker!

MORRUCHO. We'll see who is the biggest mischief-maker!

JOSÉ *enters.*

JOSÉ. Manelich has come!

MORRUCHO [*aside*]. I'm a fool to mix in what don't concern me!

[*Shouts outside of "Manelich! Manelich!"*]

PEPA *enters.*

PEPA. Where's Marta?

ANTONIA *enters.*

ANTONIA. What is she doing?

NANDO *enters with three men.*

NANDO. Here he is!

MANELICH *comes bounding in.*

MANELICH. Yes, here I am! I came runnin' like a buck!

NURI *enters.*

NURI. Let me see him! I want to see him!

Boys and girls in gala attire come in; the girls' heads are uncovered.

TOMÁS [*to* MANELICH]. So, you came runnin', did you, lad?

MANELICH. Runnin' — yes! Where is she?

PEPA [*calling*]. Marta! Marta! Your beau is here!

ANTONIA. And you should never keep your beau waitin'!

TOMÁS. She'll come! She'll come!

MANELICH [*looking at those about him*]. Holy Virgin! What a lot of people there are in the world! [*They all laugh. He goes and looks in the door at left and comes back.*] And you're all happy! So am I! But I don't want to think about the mountains! When I think about the mountains, I'm sad! I've left all my goats and my dogs up there, and the poor things love me like a brother, though I say it who shouldn't! Ah, Tomás, they'll have a hard time with me away! Who will save them from the wolf? He may come to-night! [*Dejectedly.*] That makes me feel bad!

[*All laugh, and at last* MANELICH *laughs ingenuously; he then looks toward the door again to see if* MARTA *is coming.*]

NURI. How funny he is! And how good!

TOMÁS. Come, rest a bit, lad!

MANELICH. I'm not tired! Tell me, does the wolf ever come down here?

MORRUCHO. Sometimes! You'll see! [*Aside.*] Unless God helps you.

[*All laugh maliciously and make signs to each other.*]

MANELICH [*surprised*]. Well! Anybody would think you were all goin' to be married!

TOMÁS. There, there, that will do! Leave us — leave us ——

MANELICH. No! No! [*Detains them.*] But when Marta comes — yes! She's pretty, eh? [*He goes from one to another asking if she is not pretty.*]

PEPA. Pretty! That she is — and fresh!

JOSÉ. Fresh above all!

ANTONIA. Well, I should say so — like a head of lettuce left out over night!

MANELICH [*impatiently*]. Why don't she come?

ANTONIA. She's washin' her face!

MANELICH [*delightedly*]. She's washin' it for me!

[*All laugh.*]

ANTONIA. Yes, for you — she's washin' it for you — and she does well! May she wash it hard!

PEPA. Say! Just to pass the time, won't you tell us how it came about? You know — the wedding!

MANELICH. Yes! Why not?

[*They all cry "Tell us! Tell us!"*]

NURI [*going to his side*]. I'm goin' to listen here!

[MANELICH *seats himself on the table;* NURI *is at his side; he caresses her from time to time; finally he puts his legs over the table, as though it were a rock on the mountain.*]

MANELICH. Well, you must know that up there in the mountains, when it begins to get dark, the first thing I do is to drive in my goats. Poor things! Then I put my dogs on guard. They're braver than lions! Then I go into the hut, and before the sleep gets me, every night, without missin' one, I say my prayers; first a paternoster, and then another paternoster, which makes two paternosters. [*He looks from one to another for approval. All nod assent.*] The first for the souls of my father and my mother, because they loved each other so; one is enough for both. And the other paternoster — do you know what it is for? Why, so the Lord would send me a good wife! [*All laugh;* MORRUCHO *has gone to the gate;* TOMÁS *is apart, looking crestfallen;* MANELICH *is annoyed at their laughter.*] It's nothin' to laugh at! [*They laugh again.*] Well, the next man that laughs I'll give him somethin' that'll keep him laughin' for a week!

TOMÁS [*aside*]. Holy Virgin! I can't believe it!

NURI. Go on, go on! It's lovely, what you're tellin' us!

MANELICH [*smiling again*]. Yes, so it is — yes! Well! One night I go in, and I say the first paternoster for my father and my mother, and begin the other, but I don't finish it; for in the middle of it, all of a sudden, the sleep gets me — and I am asleep. And I dreamed that the herd got frightened and ran, scatterin', here and there, toward the lagoon of Breñal, I chasin' the herd — the herd flyin' before me — till at last I took my sling, and put in a stone — [*he takes sling from side as though to throw with it*] — and away it went! It fell in the middle of the lagoon and the water began to rush and boil and a thick black smoke came up, and in the midst of the smoke there were eyes and arms, and long robes that went trailin' out across the water, and there was no end to them. [*Pause.*] I don't know whether they were witches, or whether they were not witches! One of them was beautiful — like the Virgin they carry in the procession on Sunday. I knelt down, and finished sayin' the paternoster, and then I went to sleep again; so I couldn't tell whether it was the witch or the Virgin. All I know is, she told me I would be married soon. [*All murmur, "It was a*

witch, Manelich, a witch!"] And that very morning I saw three mules, with three riders of flesh and blood, come out of the fog and up the mountain. I had just time to cut off a kid's head, and put it to broil on the coals, and then I laughed! [*Pause.*] Well, we were eatin', when the master called me one side, and said, "Are you contented to be a shepherd, Manelich?" And I said, "Why, of course! It's what I've always been!" And he: "Wouldn't you rather be a miller?" And I: "I don't know, I don't know!" And he: "And wouldn't you like to marry a pretty girl?" He made me feel — you don't know how he made me feel! "Why, if she liked me," I said, "and if she was pretty!" You remember? [*To* Tomás.]

Tomás. Yes! Marta came over where I was, so you could talk with the master.

Manelich. So! And the master said — low — so she couldn't hear: "I took her and her father in, and gave them the mill next to my house; and the father is dead — and the place needs a miller. Look well now, and see if you would like to marry Marta! And I'll pay all the expenses of the wedding." Well, I went closer, and looked at Marta, and I liked her, very much, but very much! And I told the master,

"All right, I'll marry her!" Then the master went up to Marta, and I followed him, and he asked her if she liked me; and she nodded her head, which meant "Yes." And I wanted to laugh — [*in mystified tone*] — but she was cryin'; and so it seemed to me I ought to cry, too. But I couldn't; and I began to laugh; and I laughed so hard the mountains trembled, and the goats were frightened, and the dogs began barkin'! [*With much naïveté.*] Well! And so we were sweethearts!

ANTONIA. What luck you have had, Manelich!

PEPA. Good luck indeed!

MANELICH. Yes! It was all fixed — [*snapping his fingers*] — like that! That night I only said one paternoster, because the Lord had sent me a wife. And now, what do you say to the dream? Was it the witch or was it the Virgin?

NURI. The Virgin! The Virgin!

MORRUCHO [*aside to* TOMÁS]. The witch!

TOMÁS. Hush!

[NURI *looking from the entrance.*]

NURI. The master! The master!

SEBASTIÁN *and* MOSÉN *come in.* MORRUCHO *goes to the shed on the right.*

SEBASTIÁN. Has Manelich come?

MANELICH. Here I am, master! [*He attempts to kiss* SEBASTIÁN'S *hand.*]

SEBASTIÁN [*rebuffing him*]. There, there. That will do! And Marta?

TOMÁS. She's inside.

SEBASTIÁN [*to* MOSÉN]. Tell her to come out. [MOSÉN *goes to call her.*] Everything is arranged — the papers and all. [*To* MANELICH.] You will be married at the inn at once.

MANELICH. Master — I can't talk much — but if it wasn't for the respect — master — if I wasn't afraid I'd hug too hard —— [*He attempts to embrace* SEBASTIÁN.]

SEBASTIÁN [*repulsing him*]. Many thanks! That will do!

MOSÉN [*coming from within*]. She is coming.

SEBASTIÁN [*impatiently*]. Marta!

TOMÁS [*in low voice*]. I must speak to you, Sebastián.

SEBASTIÁN. No! Another time. Marta! Thank God! The girl has come at last.

MARTA *comes from within.*

MARTA [*scornfully*]. What a hurry we are in!

SEBASTIÁN. Here you have Manelich.

MARTA [*nervously*]. Yes —— [*Aside.*] It has come! [*To* SEBASTIÁN.] Yes — let us go.

MANELICH [*to* MARTA]. And not a word for me?

MARTA [*aside*]. He disgusts me more than Sebastián!

MANELICH [*to* TOMÁS]. Bashful!

PEPA [*apart to* ANTONIA]. He's forcin' her to marry him.

ANTONIA. She's goin' to cry.

SEBASTIÁN [*approaching* MARTA *and in a low, angry voice*]. Speak to him!

MARTA [*pleadingly*]. Sebastián! For the love of God!

SEBASTIÁN. I command you!

MARTA [*to* MANELICH, *with a forced smile*]. I am very happy! And you?

MANELICH [*grinning*]. Well, can't you see?

SEBASTIÁN. More, Marta, more!

MARTA. No!

SEBASTIÁN [*fiercely*]. Careful, Marta, careful!

MOSÉN [*aside to* SEBASTIÁN]. Keep cool! [*Raising voice.*] And isn't the bridegroom going to put on his new clothes?

SEBASTIÁN [*ironically*]. True! We must deck this fine fellow in his wedding clothes!

[*All begin to laugh, and nudge each other, repeating, "Fine fellow! Fine fellow!"*

MANELICH. Well, there's nothin' to laugh at. If to be a fine fellow means to throw farther with the sling than anybody, to leap from cliff to cliff like the goats, to carry Marta on my shoulder through the deep places in the river when the snow comes down, then I am a fine fellow!

[PELUCA *and* NANDO *are convulsed with laughter.*]

PELUCA. Hurry man! Come and change your clothes. You'll look like one of those dandies from Madrid.

[*Laughing again immoderately.*]

NANDO. That's it — a dandy!

[*All shout "A dandy! A dandy!"*]

ANTONIA [*to* MANELICH]. Go on and be a dandy.

MANELICH [*laughing*]. Yes, a dandy! [*Becoming serious.*] But what is a dandy? [*To* PELUCA.] What do you mean, eh? [*Rushes at him in a rage.*] Tell me! [*The women scream. The men separate them.*] What am I? Tell me!

NANDO. Why, man — I don't know.

MOSÉN. Don't get mad Manelich. Dandy means a swell.

MANELICH [*releasing* PELUCA]. Oh, well, that's another thing. Why didn't you say so? [*Becoming angry again.*] But what is a swell, eh? [*All laugh.*] I'll break every bone in you, if you don't tell me. [*He rushes at them; they all recede.*]

SEBASTIÁN. Manelich!

MARTA [*aside*]. They're afraid of him, too!

MANELICH. Well, didn't they make me mad?

SEBASTIÁN. That will do! Your wedding clothes are in that room. [*Pointing to shed on right.*]

MOSÉN. Yes, they're in there.

MANELICH [*good-naturedly*]. All right. I'll put 'em on. I'm not mad! Nothin' could make me mad to-day!

[*He goes out, followed by all the other men save* TOMÁS *and* MOSÉN.]

PEPA [*to the other women*]. Let's go and look in the window.

ANTONIA [*and the other women*]. Come on! come on. [*They go out.*

[MARTA *sinks into chair by table.*]

TOMÁS. Sebastián, I must speak with you.

SEBASTIÁN. Wait for me outside. I'll be there in a moment.

TOMÁS. I'll wait for you. [*He goes out.*

SEBASTIÁN [*to* MOSÉN]. Keep him away from me, and see that all is ready at the inn when they arrive; have them married at once, without waiting for me. Better so.

MOSÉN. Morrucho has blabbed everything to Tomás.

SEBASTIÁN. Send Morrucho away. Listen! Marta is to think that Manelich knows all and that he consents. She will despise him the more.

MOSÉN. Never fear!

SEBASTIÁN. Now leave me alone with her. [*Addressing* MARTA.] Marta!

MARTA [*starting up*]. Sebastián! I will not marry that man!

SEBASTIÁN. You don't like him, eh?

MARTA. No!

SEBASTIÁN. Ah! You wanted a husband to rock you to sleep at night! You said to yourself, "New year — new fortune!" You were ready to forget me — and everything! You've forgotten how I picked you up out of the rain, like a frog in a ditch. You don't love me, Marta.

MARTA [*receding in fright*]. Sebastián! For God's sake don't make me marry that man! I beg you, by the soul of ——

SEBASTIÁN. Leave the dead in peace! So he disgusts you, does he?

MARTA. Yes, yes ——

SEBASTIÁN. Why, that's what I want! You don't know how glad I am to hear you say it! Do you think, if he pleased you, I'd let you marry him? Not if it cost me my farms; not if it cost me my life!

MARTA. Holy Virgin! Can it be there is a man who, knowing what I am, wishes to marry me? Oh, it is shameful — for him — and for you — and for me — and for everybody!

SEBASTIÁN. Well, here you have him! I've found the man!

MARTA. I was a child when you knew me. I'm not what I am for money; you know I'm not. You didn't buy me, but you are buying him — at what price I don't know — but you are buying him.

SEBASTIÁN. Not for money, Marta — no! I give him the mill and — well, he'll never die of hunger. But you're not to let on you know. You understand?

[*Laughter is heard outside.*]

MARTA. I will not marry him! I'll run away; I'll drown myself in the pond.

SEBASTIÁN. You'll not run away, nor you'll not drown yourself in the pond, nor you'll not leave me! Because I love you — in my way, bad it may be — but I love you, and I don't want you to leave off loving me! I'll never give you up! I'll be torn to pieces first! [*Changing tone and speaking quickly.*] You know how it is, as well as I do — that I am ruined — that I must marry that woman to save my farms. Another thing: when you and Manelich are married, my uncle will break his will, in which he disinherited me. We must be crafty, you and I, and fool them all. They are all worse than we are — worse than I! Because I, bad as I am, know how to love; and I'll love you till I die! And I'll die before I'll give you up!

MARTA. Sebastián! Don't force me to marry! I'll go away — and you'll be free — without lying and without shame. It is God's will, Sebastián!

SEBASTIÁN. Lose you? [*He catches her roughly by the arm.*] No! Not if the farms are lost, and we are lost! You'll stay here, and you'll marry that beast, and you'll obey me for love or fear, it matters

not! You'll rebel after all these years? Answer! Will you obey?

MARTA. Sebastián! Sebastián!

SEBASTIÁN [*he grips her arm*]. Will you obey? Answer!

MARTA. Sebastián! You hurt me!

SEBASTIÁN. Will you obey, I say? You don't know me yet! Answer me!

MARTA. Let me go! You hurt me — I will obey — yes, I will obey!

SEBASTIÁN [*releasing her*]. Yes, you will obey!

NANDO *comes in.*

NANDO. He doesn't want to put on his wedding clothes.

JOSÉ *enters.*

JOSÉ. He doesn't want to be a dandy.

MANELICH *and the other men come in.*

MANELICH. No, I don't! They will laugh at me! Besides, I don't want to leave off my sheepskins. [*To the crowd who have entered and are jostling him.*] Here, keep off! You huddle worse than the sheep in a storm!

SEBASTIÁN. Well, as you like then! Marta! Let us go! [MARTA *hesitates.*] Marta!

MARTA [*aside to* SEBASTIÁN]. Yes, let us go; but all is over between us.

SEBASTIÁN [*sneering*]. All is over, eh?

NANDO. As soon as they are married we'll ring the bells.

NURI [*offering mantilla to* MARTA]. Here's your mantilla, Marta.

MARTA. Oh, Nuri — Nuri!

NURI. You do love me, don't you? [*She embraces* MARTA.]

MARTA. Let me look at you! Give me a kiss — no! [*Pushing her from her.*] Leave me!

SEBASTIÁN. To the inn, everybody!

TOMÁS [*in a low voice to* SEBASTIÁN, *while the others are going out*]. No! They must not be married till I speak with you.

SEBASTIÁN. Let them go. They will wait till I come.

MOSÉN [*aside to* SEBASTIÁN]. How shall we fix it?

SEBASTIAN [*in low voice*]. Go with them, and let them be married at once. I'll attend to him.

MANELICH [*following others out*]. Hupa! Hupa! There go the sheep! Hupa! There go the goats!

All go out laughing and shouting. MORRUCHO *and* TOMÁS *remain with* SEBASTIÁN.

SEBASTIÁN [*to* MORRUCHO]. Why are you not at the wedding?

MORRUCHO [*sullenly*]. Because I'm not goin'.

SEBASTIÁN. Why?

MORRUCHO. Because I'm not.

SEBASTIÁN. Well, then, take your traps, and be off with you.

MORRUCHO. That's what I'm goin' to do.

SEBASTIÁN. And be quick about it!

MORRUCHO. I'll not be long!

[*He goes in door on right.*

SEBASTIÁN [*to* TOMÁS]. What have you to say?

TOMÁS [*tremblingly*]. I don't know — I don't know ——

SEBASTIÁN. Well, when you do, tell me.

TOMÁS. They say — I don't want to offend you, Sebastián, but there's no time to lose — they say you and Marta love each other, but in a bad way; and this poor boy — there! I can't believe it — and in this marriage I'm takin' the place of a father to him. I — I'm not myself — don't be offended, son — tell me the truth!

SEBASTIÁN. Why, the truth is — it's all a lie!

TOMÁS [*triumphantly*]. There! I said so! [MORRUCHO *has come in with bundle and zarape over his shoulder.*] Do you hear, evil tongue?

MORRUCHO [*fiercely*]. I told you the truth!

SEBASTIÁN. Out of here! Never let me see you again!

TOMÁS. Scamp! After eatin' the master's bread all these years!

MORRUCHO. Don't you call me a scamp!

SEBASTIÁN [*threateningly*]. Get out of here — if you don't ——

MORRUCHO [*squaring off*]. And what if I don't?

TOMÁS. What — to the master?

MORRUCHO. He ain't my master, and I wish he never had been.

SEBASTIÁN. Be off with you, you cur!

MORRUCHO [*throwing aside bundle and zarape*]. You call me a cur? I did tell Tomás — but I didn't tell him all! You come here at night, after dark, by the corral gate. You creep through the corridor, back of that curtain. I've seen you.

[SEBASTIÁN *attempts to strike him, but is prevented by* TOMÁS.]

SEBASTIÁN. Let me go!

MORRUCHO. May God strike me dead if I'm lyin'! And if He doesn't, let him — [*pointing to* SEBASTIÁN] — take oath that I'm lyin'! Let's see if he will!

SEBASTIÁN. Come, Tomás! Leave this fool!

MORRUCHO. You see! I told you the truth. [*He recovers his bundle and zarape.*]

MOSÉN *comes in.*

MOSÉN [*to* TOMÁS]. Well! What are you doing here? Your wife has had all the candles to light.

TOMÁS [*excitedly*]. No — no — they must not be married ——

SEBASTIÁN [*aside to* MOSÉN]. Tomás is not to leave this place. Do you understand? [*He goes out.*

TOMÁS. No, no — they must not be married! [*He attempts to follow* SEBASTIÁN.]

MOSÉN [*detaining him*]. Where are you going?

TOMÁS. I'm goin' to stop the marriage!

MORRUCHO. Hurry then. [*To* MOSÉN]. Let the old man go!

TOMÁS. O God! Poor Manelich! They must not be married! [*The bells begin ringing*]. The bells! It is too late! My God! What have I done to that poor boy? O God! forgive me!

MORRUCHO. Good-bye, Tomás!

TOMÁS. Good-bye, son! [*Holds out his arms to* MORRUCHO.]

MORRUCHO [*embracing him*]. Forgive the hard words I've said. Good-bye!

[MORRUCHO *goes out;* TOMÁS *sinks into a chair;* MOSÉN *goes to entrance; noise is heard of people approaching.*]

TOMÁS. I feel as though there was a rope about my neck! My head is on fire!

[*He rises and wildly rushes out. Voices are heard, coming nearer and nearer, crying, "Long live the bridegroom! Long live the bride!" All enter noisily;* MARTA *first, with her eyes on the ground;* NURI, *with her arm about* MARTA'S *waist;* MANELICH *in the midst of the men, who are poking fun at him.*]

MOSÉN. That will do now! To your homes, all of you!

MANELICH. They're like the herd for all the world — goats here, goats there. If I only had my sling!

[*All go out except* MANELICH *and* MARTA.]

MOSÉN [*the last to leave*]. Now close your door, and good night to you!

[MARTA *sinks into a chair.*]

MANELICH [*looking after the crowd*]. If I had my sling and a good rock, I'd fix those cattle! [*He turns suddenly.*] Marta!

MARTA [*coming to herself*]. What is it? What do you want?

MANELICH. He said close the door — shall I?

MARTA. Close it. [*She rises and begins fixing the dishes on the table.*] All is over!

MANELICH. Ho! Hum! Maybe I'm not tired! I'd rather have a thunder storm in the mountains than all this noise! I couldn't stand it long! Ah — [*stretching himself*] — now to rest my bones as I do up there! [*He throws himself on the ground.*] Come, sit here beside me. There are no chairs up there — we don't need them — these sticks — [*pointing to chairs*] — eh, Marta?

MARTA. What?

MANELICH. Come here!

MARTA. No! Leave me alone!

MANELICH [*aside*]. Wild! [*To* MARTA.] All right. If you act that way I won't tell you some thing! [*Laughing sheepishly.*] I've forgotten it already. When a fellow is happy I believe it makes him more of a muttonhead than ever. [*He gets up and searches his pockets, then his breast, and finally takes out a hand-*

kerchief tied by the corners.] We'll see! We'll see! It's heavy! She didn't expect this! [*Aloud.*] Marta!

MARTA. Oh — again? Let me alone!

MANELICH [*aside*]. She's the wildest thing I ever had to do with. [*Spreads out the handkerchief on the table.*] Look! Do you see this? [*He takes up a quarter.*] It's a peseta! [*Throws it back in the handkerchief.*] The first one I ever earned. I've always kept it to see if it would grow. And look — look — it has grown! [*Handling the silver and copper coins.*] Up there when I counted them they sounded different! I like the way they sound now! It must be because you're here! Well! Well! [*Picks up a dollar.*] See this dollar? See this stain? It's blood — my blood! The master gave it to me — Master Sebastián — God bless him! Touch it! Touch it! [*He catches her hand to make her touch the coin; she resists, but without aversion.*]

MARTA. Will you be quiet?

MANELICH. Well? I'll kiss it! [*He kisses the dollar and throws it back in the handkerchief.*] Up there, every night, a wolf would come to the fold; and every mornin' — a dog, paws up, with his entrails torn out — and a sheep or a lamb missin'; and I cursin' myself! Till one night I went and hid

behind the rocks by the barranca and waited. The cart in the heavens — you know what it is? The cart in the heavens are seven stars, that keep goin' round and round, like the wheels of a cart. Well, the cart in the heavens turned round to twelve, and then to one, and I listenin' — nothin'! The sheep bells — the snow water drippin' — the cold mornin' wind in the trees! The seven stars kept on turnin', round and round, till I could almost hear the axle creak. All at once I heard a noise — a tread — and somethin' big and dark sprang over me — like that. I felt hot breath on my neck. My hair stood on end, and here, in my breast, my heart went pum — pum — pum — so! till it choked me. Then I heard the dogs, and the bleatin' of the sheep, and with my arms bare, with my knife in my hand, and my breast bare, I ran and stood where I knew the wolf must come. He came, draggin' the sheep, right against me. I made a grab at him — drove the knife in to the hilt — and together we rolled into the barranca; I bitin' the wolf, the wolf bitin' me; he howlin', I howlin' louder yet; my face against his face, my teeth against his teeth —— [*He pauses suddenly, then says in a placid tone.*] That's how I got this scar. [*Pointing to his lip.*]

MARTA [*moved and interested*]. And what — what ——

MANELICH. Nothin'! The next day some shepherds found us in the barranca: the sheep — dead; the wolf — dead; and I — half dead, and covered with bites and scratches. They took me to the hut, and rubbed me with tallow and snow water; and in a few days the master came up and gave me this dollar. As I went quick, to kiss his hand, the wound opened again; and that's how the blood came on the dollar. Master Sebastián promised me a dollar for every wolf I killed; but since then I haven't killed a single one. [*This last with much tranquillity.*]

MARTA [*recovering herself*]. Manelich, it is very late!

MANELICH [*picking up handkerchief and offering it to her*]. Well, take this — there are twenty-four dollars — you take care of them!

MARTA. No — no — they are yours! Take them to your room!

MANELICH. To my room? To ours, you mean — there!

MARTA. Light your candle, and go — go to your room. [*Pointing to shed at right*]. And good night!

MANELICH. This my room? And that yours?

MARTA. You know very well — you wicked man — why do you make me repeat it? Go — you wicked man — go!

MANELICH. I, a wicked man? Why am I wicked? Why? Tell me! Tell me! I want you to tell me!

MARTA. You know why!

MANELICH. I know why?

MARTA. Yes — because you consented!

MANELICH. Consented — to what?

MARTA. To marry me!

MANELICH. Oh, that — yes!

MARTA. And why did you consent?

MANELICH. To what? That you should be my wife? Why, because I loved you! Because I loved you more than anything in the world — more than my father — more than my mother — more!

MARTA [*she is aghast with surprise and horror*]. Manelich!

MANELICH. What makes you look at me so? It seems — it seems almost — you're not my wife!

MARTA. Manelich!

MANELICH [*wildly*]. I must be dreamin'.

MARTA [*aside*]. Oh! my God! They have deceived me — and they have deceived this poor man!

MANELICH. Marta!

MARTA. Leave me! Leave me!

MANELICH. You have said such things! I don't understand!

MARTA. No — no! I've said nothing! It's — it's because I'm half mad — it's because I don't know what they've done with me!

MANELICH. What they've done with you? [*As he says this a light passes back of the curtain.*]

MARTA [*starting in horror, and speaking in an aside*]. Sebastián! Oh, wretch!

MANELICH. What is that? A light? Are we not alone? Who's in there?

MARTA. No one!

MANELICH [*grasping his knife*]. Well, I'll see!

MARTA [*interposing between him and door*]. No! The light was there — leave it alone!

MANELICH. No! I say no! [*Light disappears.*] You see? They have put it out!

MARTA. Oh, I guess there was no light! You — you only thought you saw one!

MANELICH. Why, didn't you just say the light was there? Yes, and I saw it! And you — you saw it, too!

MARTA. I didn't see it! You said you saw it!

MANELICH. You didn't see a light?

MARTA. No! No!

MANELICH. You didn't see it?

MARTA. No, nor you, either!

MANELICH. No! [*He stands motionless, regarding* MARTA.] I didn't see a light? I didn't see a light?

MARTA [*seating herself and speaking in an aside*]. I must pass the night here — alone! [*To* MANELICH, *pointing to the door on right.*] You heard what I told you!

MANELICH. Yes, yes — I know — you needn't tell me again — I — inside there — but not yet! Not yet! [*He sinks slowly to the ground, his eyes riveted on the curtain.*]

MARTA [*aside*]. The wretch! He has always been a wretch! [MANELICH *is edging along the ground toward* MARTA.] This poor creature thinks I don't hear him! [MANELICH *softly takes up the hem of* MARTA'S *gown and presses it to his lips.*]

MANELICH [*sobbing*]. Here — close beside her — but not as her husband — no — as if I was alone — up there in my hut in the mountains — I must say the prayer — for my father and my mother —— and my wife — no — because — I have my wife — I have my wife —— [*He folds his hands, closes his eyes and*

lifts his face to Heaven.] Our Father —— [*He breaks down sobbing.*]

MARTA [*aside*]. O God!

MANELICH [*looking around stealthily, knife in hand*]. All is asleep in the fold! No — the wolf will not come — not come — not come!

ACT II

ACT II

SCENE: *The same as in Act I. Several days have elapsed.*

TIME: *Early forenoon.* MANELICH *is discovered seated, and* NURI *is knitting the same jacket.*

MANELICH [*in depressed tone*]. Why didn't you come yesterday, Nuri?

NURI. It was all the fault of the turkeys. You know I have to take 'em out in the mornin' and in the afternoon, too. But to-day the sun burned so, I shut 'em up in the corral and came to see Manelich instead.

MANELICH. You're a good child, Nuri.

NURI. Oh, dear! I'm so worried! [*She gets up and looks anxiously toward the door.*]

MANELICH. What about?

NURI. I'm so afraid Marta will come! She used to love me, Marta did. She used to kiss me, and say she wished she was like me. But since she married you, she hates me! She looks at me — so — [*look-*

ing fiercely] — as though she would eat me up. I don't hate her, because I know she loves you.

MANELICH. Loves me?

NURI. Why, of course! [MANELICH *rises and begins walking up and down.*] What's the matter?

MANELICH [*seating himself*]. Nothin'!

NURI. I say she hates me, because she hates everybody at our house. Do you know, she called Mosén, and told him — I don't know what — and Mosén, who is the majordomo, came to our house and threatened everybody and said they were not to come to the mill backbitin' people; that no one had any business about the mill, unless they brought wheat to be ground.

MANELICH. You say they were backbitin' somebody?

NURI. That's what Mosén said.

MANELICH. What about?

NURI. I don't know. The folks at home are always the same. They talk about everybody.

MANELICH. What a good little thing you are, Nuri!

NURI [*very contented and smiling*]. You don't know what I'm thinkin' about!

MANELICH. What do your sisters say about me?

NURI [*ignoring question*]. I was thinkin' I would make you a jacket, when I finish this one, but not this colour; it must be blue and pink; you'll look so nice in it!

MANELICH. No, don't make me the jacket, Nuri — thank you just the same, but don't make me the jacket.

NURI. Why not?

MANELICH. Because by the time you finish the jacket, God only knows — there — don't make it, Nuri, don't make it.

NURI [*rising*]. Well, I'm angry, and I'm goin'.

MANELICH [*forcing her back into her seat*]. Don't go, Nuri.

NURI. Well, I'll stay, but I'm angry just the same.

MANELICH [*sits at table supporting his head with his hands*]. That light, back of the curtain, a man was carryin' it! What I want to know is who he was. I'll kill him — and go back up there.

NURI. Manelich, I'm still angry.

MANELICH. Yes, Nuri, yes; poor little thing!

NURI. Are you sad, Manelich?

MANELICH. No.

NURI. I know why. Because you're married to a cross woman.

MANELICH. Do they say Marta is cross?

NURI. I don't know. They talk, and talk, and never stop talkin'. You know why I like you? Well, in the first place, because you tell me those nice stories about wolves and witches, that make me so afraid, and are so beautiful. And in the second place, because everybody says, "Poor Manelich!" Then I say, "Poor Manelich, I'm goin' to make him a jacket!"

MANELICH. Poor Manelich! So they all know it! What else? What else?

NURI. Why yesterday, when I was comin' from mass, a lot of them were talkin' about you, and I walked by close, pretendin' not to notice them.

MANELICH. And what were they sayin'?

NURI. Poor Manelich — just as they always do.

MANELICH [*in desperation*]. Oh, when will the master come, so I can tell him everything?

NURI. Manelich, do you believe the world is very wicked?

MANELICH. In the lowlands, yes! Up there, no! It may be because there are no men up there; perhaps that's the reason.

NURI. Poor Manelich!

MANELICH [*wildly*]. You, too!

NURI. It's because I'm sorry! Manelich, haven't you any brothers?

MANELICH. No! I'm all alone; and it seems I'm one too many!

NURI. Do you wish you had a little brother, just as big as I am?

MANELICH [*caressing her*]. Poor little Nuri!

MARTA *comes from within.*

NURI [*to* MANELICH]. Marta! I must go!

MANELICH. Don't move!

MARTA [*aside*]. Nuri! She is always with him! If he were really suffering, he wouldn't feel like talking to her. [*She goes to fireplace, fans the flame, and places an earthen jar on the fire.*] The fire won't burn to-day! It seems to act so on purpose! What are they talking about? They don't even look at me! Why should they? [*Fiercely.*] I don't want him to talk to Nuri! [*Dejectedly.*] But what right have I to say what he shall do? [*She goes within.*

NURI. She's gone! Well, we were quiet, both of us!

MANELICH. And why were you quiet, Nuri?

NURI. Because I was countin' stitches. Why were you quiet?

MANELICH. Because I was countin' days.

NURI. Do you love Marta very much?

MANELICH. More than anything else in the world. I can't tell you how much, Nuri! There — it seems to me I loved her long before I saw her. And when at last I saw her, I felt like sayin', "You knew well how to make me long for you! It's time you came!" You see? Such foolery! Bah! If I told you all ——

NURI. Tell me, tell me, Manelich — I love to hear about it!

MANELICH. If you knew how many times when I was up there alone I've watched the lowlands — lookin' for somethin'! The sun shinin' over all — the hills, the fields — as far as I could see, and I wonderin', "At what spot, in all the lowlands, is my future wife?" You'll never guess how I found out where she was! No! You'll never guess!

NURI. No, Manelich, no! How did you?

MANELICH. I put a stone in the sling, swung it round three times, with my eyes shut, and threw it as hard as I could. Then I opened my eyes, quick, to see where it came down, and there, where it fell, was my wife, growin' up like an armful of roses — for me, for me ——

NURI. And where did it fall?

MANELICH. Toward the lowlands; never toward the mountain. And from the lowlands came Marta — from the lowlands! [*He bows his head in his hands.*]

NURI. Don't cry, Manelich! You'll make me cry, too. [*She brightens quickly.*] But suppose some one had been comin' up the mountain when you were throwin' the stone with your eyes shut, and it had struck him!

MANELICH. It never struck any one but me; it struck me here. [*Placing his hand on his heart.*]

NURI. Does your heart ache? Why?

MANELICH. Because — I know what I know. I may be a fool, blind to the things of the world, but sometimes the blind see. There was a blind man — and he was stone blind — used to come up there, and I would give him milk from the goats. When the rain caught him and the lightin' flashed, he always covered his eyes with his hands; so I say that although he was blind, the flash of the lightnin' has made him see. Well, I'm like that blind man — the lightnin' entered my eyes — and I have seen.

MARTA *returns from the house.*

MARTA [*aside*]. Still here! [*Aloud.*] Nuri!

NURI [*to* MANELICH, *offering him a handkerchief*]. Marta! Take this handkerchief so she won't see you're cryin'!

MANELICH [*refusing*]. I'm not cryin'!

MARTA. Listen, Nuri! I don't want to see you here again! Do you hear me? I don't want you to come here!

NURI. You see, Manelich? Marta turns me out!

MARTA. I don't turn you out! Oh, I don't know what's the matter with me! [*Aside.*] When they talk to me, it sounds like something pounding in here. [*She clasps her temples with her hands; she goes to the fire, seats herself, and takes up the fire-fan.*]

NURI [*giving the basket with jacket, etc., to* MANELICH]. Hold this! I'll go fan the fire! Marta can't make it burn! [*Approaching* MARTA.] Give it to me!

MARTA. No!

NURI. Give it to me, Marta; you can't make it burn.

MARTA [*frantically*]. Go! Go, I say!

NURI [*half crying*]. Why?

MARTA. Because I don't want you here!

NURI [*angrily*]. Well, I won't go till Manelich tells me to! I guess he's the master!

MARTA [*dejectedly*]. Yes, he's the master.

MANELICH. Nuri! Do as Marta tells you! If she says go, you must go! Marta is in her house.

MARTA. No, Manelich, no!

MANELICH [*to* NURI, *giving her the basket*]. Take this and go — poor little girl!

MARTA. Nuri — stay — I don't want you to go!

NURI [*crying*]. Well, I'm goin' now!

MANELICH. Don't cry, Nuri. I'll go with you.

MARTA. No! You shall not! I want you to stay here!

MANELICH. You want me to stay? Me? What for?

MARTA. Do what you like!

NURI. She is cryin'!

MANELICH. Don't you believe it! Why, we're as happy — always laughin' — and always together — look — look — how she's laughin'! [MARTA *sobs convulsively.*] And I, the same — always laughin' — always laughin'! Come on, Nuri!

[*Goes out with* NURI, *laughing forcedly.*

MARTA [*alone*]. Always together! He said, always together! And he is waiting for Sebastián to come, so he can tell him all, and go back — up there!

Oh, I hope Sebastián will never come! I hope he will stay away always! I never loved him; and now I hate him with all my heart! If he never came back — who knows — perhaps Manelich would forgive me! He is so good! And he does love me; I know he loves me! He thinks I don't hear him when he comes to my door at night, and kneels down and cries — yes, cries — poor Manelich! But he never speaks to me — not a word — he leaves me for Nuri! [*Springing up in anger.*] He shall not! We'll see! We'll see! [*Half-crying, half-angry, she starts to go out, but is stopped by* TOMÁS, *who comes in the door.*]

TOMÁS. Where are you goin', Marta?

MARTA. I don't know! Nowhere!

TOMÁS. I saw Manelich go out, and that is why I came — because he is not here. I can't bear to see him, poor fellow — he is desperate!

MARTA [*on the defensive*]. And why is he desperate?

TOMÁS. Well, that is a question! Has he no eyes to see the whole world laughin' at him?

MARTA. The world is bad!

TOMÁS. Bad — yes — very bad! And now I want to know what I shall say when Manelich asks me why I made the marriage between you.

MARTA [*angrily*]. How do I know?

TOMÁS. And more—what shall I say when he asks me who the man is — the man — do you understand?

MARTA [*despairingly*]. Oh, I don't know — I don't know.

TOMÁS. Well, Manelich has said — and it's all over town — that before he leaves you and goes back to the mountains he means to find out who the man is and kill him.

MARTA. Kill him? Did he say that? But Sebastián is no coward — and besides he is the master! He would not dare — no, he would not dare!

TOMÁS. Well, that's what he says, and as I told you before, after he has taken leave of Sebastián — he does not suspect him — he will leave you and go back to the mountains.

MARTA. Leave me! That doesn't require much courage!

TOMÁS. I tell him he does well to leave you — to leave you forever — do you hear? And better to-day than to-morrow! A girl who does what you have done, deserves worse — yes, worse!

MARTA [*piteously*]. Oh, did you never have a daughter?

TOMÁS. A daughter? Yes, I had one. She died

when she was a little thing. And when I see what the world is — and when I see you — I say, "Better dead!" And I thank God for takin' her.

MARTA [*drawing nearer, and in a significant tone*]. And if you had died first — and if she had grown up alone — always alone? And if she had met Sebastián?

TOMÁS [*covering his ears*]. Stop! Wicked girl! Stop! It was you who ruined Sebastián!

MARTA [*weeping*]. I ruined him! I! O God! Have you no pity? Oh, I cannot bear it! Oh, let me die!

TOMÁS [*aside in wonder*]. She's cryin'!

MARTA. Every one against me — against me — because I'm alone! I never knew till now how alone!

TOMÁS. There, don't cry! I'm an old fool, and my eyes are weak — and though you don't deserve it — there — if you keep on, I shall cry, too.

MARTA. Oh! I want to tell you all ——

TOMÁS [*snivelling*]. I don't want to hear it, for I shall believe all you say, and it will all be a lie!

MARTA. A lie? Listen, and you will see whether it is a lie!

TOMÁS. Well, tell me then, and get through as quick as you can!

MARTA [*drying her tears resolutely*]. They say, to make me angry, that I never had a father nor a mother; that I was born — like the frogs that grow out there in the pond.

TOMÁS. You see? But I never believed it — never! No, I didn't believe that!

MARTA. I did have a mother. She was blind. I never had any one else, but I did have my mother; she and I used to beg, down there in the city. I remember we used to sit on the steps of a church, with a door, oh, so high! There we used to sit and beg. When did we begin? Who knows? Before I was born, I think! I never saw my mother any other way, except with her hand out — so! Even at night, when she was asleep, she would hold out her hand. It used to frighten me! One day we were not the only ones begging at the church door. A man came and sat beside us, and I thought he couldn't see, either. I thought all people who begged were blind. The end of it was, that man — he had a red face and white hair — came to live with us. Sometimes he and my mother would fight; sometimes they laughed and seemed very happy. But he never struck me, nor he never petted me, nor spoke a word to me. So it went on for years. One

morning, my mother did not wake up, and the man stood by the bed and cried. I was so surprised. I thought blind people couldn't cry; that if they had no eyes to see with, they had none to cry with!

TOMÁS. And was your mother dead?

MARTA. Yes, dead! And that man would not be comforted for the death of my mother — my poor mother — her eyes looked worse than ever as she lay there — dead — with her hand out. It seemed as though she was going to ask for something in the other world.

TOMÁS [*wiping his eyes*]. Poor child! I told you I should cry! Go on, Marta, go on!

MARTA. Well, you know, the man took me with him — when they went to bury my mother. And when we turned to leave the grave, I don't know why, I said to him without thinking, "And what shall we do now, father?" He was crying, and he took my hand and said, "Come with me, my daughter!"

TOMÁS. Go on! go on!

MARTA. There isn't much more to tell. When one walks in the road where all the world goes, one may walk slowly; but when one falls into a barranca, one falls quickly. [*Changing tone.*] We went back to the church door to beg — and all the time I was

growing — getting to be a big girl. One day I said, "Father — and if we should try to get work!" And he said, "Yes." That he would look for work for us both. But we went on begging, till one day we heard they were looking for all the beggars, to shut them up in a home; and then we ran away, out of the city. We walked and walked, till we came to these fields; a big storm came on, and we took shelter in Sebastián's mill; it was full of people — the master himself was there; they made me sing and dance, and the master said I was pretty. Then he told us we might stay here, and he gave us the mill; he came every day and brought me presents; if I ran away from him he was furious; he said I was nothing; that I was like the frogs they find in the pond after a rain; and with threats and caresses, blows and neglect, I came to be what I am without knowing — without knowing ——

TOMÁS. Poor child! Poor child! Ah, Sebastián, God will never forgive you.

MARTA. What could I do? Run away? Impossible! Kill myself? It was a sin; I was afraid; I was only a child; and then, besides, one is born to live — not to die so soon! I'm bad, but I'm not all bad; and I would so like to be good, if some one

would only help me! Don't despise me! Oh, if Manelich would only help me to be good! I married him because Sebastián made me. Manelich disgusted me — then — because I thought the master had bought him. And still, in spite of all — the suffering — the disgust — when we left the church I said to myself, without wanting to, that he was mine, for better or worse — my husband, in the sight of God; that he belonged to me and nobody else. I never before had anything or anybody that belonged to me alone.

TOMÁS. And if Sebastián comes back? And if you ——

MARTA [*passionately*]. No! No! He must not come back!

TOMÁS. But if he does?

MARTA. I have Manelich now. He will defend me — he must! If he does not, he is more wicked, more cowardly than I am!

TOMÁS. But what if he despises you? What if he no longer loves you?

MARTA. No, no, you shall not say that! He does love me! I know it. He may despise me, but he does love me! And I — I love him — I love him — do you hear? I love him — bad as I am — I can

love — no one shall deny me that! I never knew what love meant till I had Manelich ——

TOMÁS. Why not tell Manelich all, Marta?

MARTA. And how does a woman tell such things to her husband?

TOMÁS. Why, the same as you've told me.

MARTA. Ah! With you it is different, but with him — with Manelich — oh, I cannot; my tongue would cleave to the roof of my mouth! Why, we are hours together without speaking a word! What torture!

TOMÁS. Poor girl! poor girl!

MARTA. Help me — talk to me as though I were your daugh —— [*She stops suddenly and puts her hand to her lips.*]

TOMÁS. Say it, say it, as though you were my daughter! Yes, I will help you! You are a good girl — there — a good girl; you have always been one — yes — I say you have; and even if you haven't — in wanting to be good you are good. There! there! poor child — poor child! [*He embraces her.*]

MARTA [*weeping*]. Oh, Tomás!

TOMÁS [*listening*]. Who is coming?

MARTA. Oh, those women! I don't want to see them! Send them away! But you will come back?

TOMÁS. Yes, yes! Keep up your courage, Marta, we'll fix it all right.

MARTA. Good-bye! I don't want those women to see me. Good-bye! [*She goes within.*

Enter PEPA *and* ANTONIA.

PEPA. Look! There's Tomás!

ANTONIA. Why, what's the matter? He's been cryin'!

TOMÁS. It's the smoke! Marta couldn't make the fire burn!

PEPA. Come on in, Antonia! We'll see if they'll put us out! Mosén said no one was to come here except with wheat for the mill. It's the master's orders.

TOMÁS. Well, then, you'd better go before you're driven out.

[NANDO *calls from outside.*]

NANDO. Hello there!

PEPA [*laughing*]. Come on in.

JOSÉ *enters with half-sack of wheat on his back.*

JOSÉ. Here's some wheat for the mill.

NANDO *and* PELUCA *come in with sacks of wheat.*

NANDO. Here we are and here's what we were told to bring. It's wheat! That's why we come to the mill!

PELUCA. And the mill is to grind wheat!

JOSÉ. We had trouble enough to find the wheat, though.

PELUCA [*aside*]. This is seed!

JOSÉ. Well, we're here!

PELUCA. But won't Manelich or Marta come out even for this? [*Nodding toward the wheat.*]

JOSÉ. Say, Tomás! You ought to know! How is the marriage turnin' out, eh?

PEPA. Yes! You ought to know! Tell us, Tomás!

OMNES. Tell us! Tell us!

TOMÁS. Well, I'll tell you—I'll tell you all I know.

[*They all cry, "Yes! Yes!"*]

TOMÁS [*mysteriously*]. But nobody else must hear!

[*All go to look from the different doors to make sure there are no listeners; they then return and surround him.*]

PEPA. Well, begin!

ANTONIA. And tell everything!

JOSÉ. Yes, in cases like this, you must tell everything!

TOMÁS [*relates the following with much relish*]. Well, sir, once upon a time, St. Michael and the Devil had a quarrel; because the devil said all women were gabblers and scandal-mongers, and St. Michael said there must be at least one woman somewhere who was not. So St. Michael came to the earth, to look for the woman who was not a gabbler, and who was not a scandal-monger, and who was not a hussy.

PEPA. Well, this is nice!

ANTONIA. The old fool!

JOSÉ. Never mind, go on — let's hear the rest!

TOMÁS. Well, sir, St. Michael walked and walked, and he didn't find the woman he was lookin' for. And he got so tired, he sat down to rest in the shade of a hedge of honeysuckle. On the other side of the hedge there were some women, and they saw St. Michael through the hedge. Then they began to talk, and said he must be a drunkard, he had such a red face; and he was surely a thief — the very clothes he wore must be stolen — for he was dressed like St. Michael, and must have been robbin' a church. But among them there was one old woman who said nothin' bad about him, but just kept lookin' at him and smilin' sweetly. Well, that night, when the poor old woman was asleep in her bed, St. Michael

came and caught her up, wrapped her in the sheet, covered her gray head with his wings of an archangel, and carried her to the gates of the infernal region. There he stood and shouted "Demon of demons! Come out! I bring you the one woman in the world who is not a gabbler!" Out comes the Devil, red in the face from the terrible heat inside, and when he sees the old woman he laughs, and he laughs, and he says, "Why! She's been deaf and dumb ever since she was born!" So, you see, that's all I know — that's all — that's all. [*He goes out laughing.*

ANTONIA. He thinks he's smart!

PEPA. He wishes he hadn't had a finger in the marriage, just the same.

ANTONIA. We haven't done any harm, but he has! Poor Manelich!

JOSÉ. Well, he had the laugh on you that time!

NANDO. And a good one!

PELUCA. He made me laugh, too! Imagine St. Michael carryin' off the old woman!

ANTONIA. Hush! here comes Manelich!

MANELICH *enters and sits at table without noticing them.*

MANELICH. I can't stand this any longer! The master's comin' to-day. I'll tell him all, and then —

I'll go back up there, to die alone — of grief and rage!

ANTONIA [*creeping up behind him and imitating him*]. Hupa! Hupa!

MANELICH [*turning quickly*]. Who's that?

JOSÉ. Good morning, Manelich!

PEPA. Good morning!

MANELICH. What do you want?

PELUCA. Is there enough water to run the mill?

MANELICH. Water? Yes, and to spare! Leave your wheat in there!

[PELUCA *carries his wheat in shed and returns.*]

ANTONIA. How cross you look, Manelich!

MANELICH. I look as I always do.

JOSÉ. He's not himself since he left off tending his goats!

PEPA. Well, now he has Marta!

ANTONIA. But Marta doesn't need any one to tend her — she tends herself!

[*All laugh covertly.*]

MANELICH. Why do you laugh? And why do you try to hide your laughin'?

ANTONIA. We're not laughin'!

PEPA. No, we're not laughin', Manelich! [*Laughs as she says it.*]

MANELICH. Yes, you are laughin'! You're red in the face, but not from shame. No, you don't know what shame is!

JOSÉ [*stepping forward in a threatening manner*]. You say that to my sisters?

MANELICH. Yes, to your sisters! What of it?

JOSÉ [*turning his back calmly and walking away*]. Well, then, you didn't say it to me!

NANDO. That's so!

PELUCA. That's so!

MANELICH [*in a fury*]. Damnation! Speak quick, all of you! Say what you're laughin' at, or I'll tear you to pieces!

[*They all recede quickly.*]

NANDO. Manelich!

PEPA. Are you crazy?

ANTONIA. If you want to know you can ask Morrucho.

PEPA. That's it! Ask Morrucho!

MANELICH. Morrucho? You say Morrucho?

PELUCA. That's what we said!

PEPA. Or if not, ask Marta! Here she is!

MARTA *comes from within.*

MARTA. What do you want here?

JOSÉ. We have some wheat to be ground.

MARTA. The mill is there.

PEPA. Oh, we're in no hurry; so we're just restin' a while.

MARTA. You can rest outside! You've no call to come in here!

[*They go out, looking back curiously, and exclaiming, "Now, we'll see!" "He's like a crazy man!" "Marta's in for it now!"*]

MANELICH [*sitting at the table*]. Morrucho! They said Morrucho! Then that man was Morrucho!

MARTA. Now for dinner — and such a dinner! Poor Manelich! I can't bear to look at him!

MANELICH. Morrucho! That night — I ought to have gone in there, and cut off his head — and then hers. Yes, hers! [*Pause.*] They thought they had nothing to fear from me. That's why they married me to Marta. [*Pause.*] Well, then, I never thought of anything bad. But now — yes! Now — yes!

MARTA. How shall I make him speak? How? I'm tired of seeing him always the same, silent and despising me. Let him beat me, drag me about the floor, only treat me as something that belongs to him! [*Calling.*] Manelich!

MANELICH [*disregarding her*]. To hear her you'd think she was a child!

MARTA [*calls again in a loud but sweet voice*]. Manelich! [*He rises.*] Dinner is ready!

MANELICH. Oh, dinner! Yes, dinner! [*He takes a knife and begins cutting the bread;* MARTA *has gone to the fireplace. Aside.*] It wouldn't be much to cut off a man's head — and less hers! [*His eyes meet* MARTA'S *as she comes from the fireplace.*] If she wouldn't look at me — ah! [*He throws down the knife savagely.*]

MARTA. Come, Manelich! [*She has brought an iron pot from the fireplace, from which she serves him and then herself.*]

MANELICH. Oh, how I used to eat — up there! Here every mouthful chokes me!

MARTA. God help me!

MANELICH [*eying her contemptuously*]. Yes! God help you! You —— [*He stops abruptly.*]

MARTA [*eagerly*]. What? Go on! What were you going to say?

MANELICH [*turning away*]. Nothing! Nothing!

MARTA. Speak for once in your life! I beg you for ——

MANELICH [*ironically*]. For whom?

MARTA. For ——

MANELICH. For whom? For — him? [*Aside.*] How this woman disgusts me! [*Rising abruptly.*] Enough of this! I'll go back to my mountains!

MARTA. No, Manelich, no! Listen and forgive me!

MANELICH. Forgive you? I, forgive you? [*He laughs wildly.*] Tell me! What have I ever done to you? Why should you deceive me? Speak! Why did you? Why, why ——

MARTA. Because I was nothing — nobody! Because all I knew was to obey! I didn't know you. I had never even noticed you. I didn't know what love meant, Manelich!

MANELICH. Well, then, why did you marry me, and not that man? [*With added fury.*] Tell me! Tell me! Because I don't know, and I want to know — and thinkin' about it is drivin' me mad! [*Running toward her.*] Tell me! Why did you? Tell me — tell me ——

MARTA. Oh, I cannot! You'll hate me more than you do now!

MANELICH. Hate you! Kill you is what I ought to do!

MARTA. Oh! Kill me? I wish you would!

MANELICH. No! No! Better for me to go away!

MARTA [*wildly and with the hope of detaining him*]. Oh, yes! You're going because you don't dare to talk out! You're afraid! Coward! You're afraid! You're afraid! [*She follows him in desperation.*]

MANELICH [*turning*]. I, afraid? I?

MARTA [*changing tone and weeping*]. Insult me, Manelich! Beat me! But don't leave me! [*She falls on her knees and tries to throw her arms about him.*]

MANELICH. Keep off! Let me go! This place is all a pit of misery. [*He frees himself and starts for the door;* MARTA *falls forward, supporting herself with her hands on the floor; she says what follows, laughing and crying alternately.*]

MARTA. Yes, you leave me for the man I love! I fooled you for him — yes, for him; and you — you're not man enough to beat me! [MANELICH *stops and turns. She goes toward him on her knees. Aside.*] He won't go! [*In supplicating voice.*] Manelich! [*He has hesitated but starts to go again; she returns to her former tone.*] Ah — and I never belonged to you — I never was yours — no — never was yours!

MANELICH [*rushing toward her threateningly*]. — Stop! stop ——

MARTA [*rising and in a taunting voice*]. I've fooled you — and I'm glad I fooled you — and I laugh in your face — as everybody does! [*She laughs hysterically.*] He's coming to-night! I'm waiting for him this very minute! [MANELICH *runs to the table and catches up the knife.*]

MANELICH. And this very minute I'm goin' to kill you!

MARTA [*catching his left arm*]. Pshaw! You won't kill me! I've fooled you! And I'll fool you again! [*Laughs.*] Let's see if you kill me! Let's see!

MANELICH [*drawing back in horror and sinking into a chair*]. No, no! I cannot ——

MARTA. Oh, coward! That shows you sold yourself for money! [MANELICH *rushes at her and in the struggle she is wounded in the arm.*]

MANELICH. Curse you!

MARTA [*exultingly*]. Ah! at last!

MANELICH [*throwing away the knife in horror*]. What have I done? O God!

MARTA [*supporting herself against the table and laughing frantically*]. Blood! My blood! And you

did it — you! What joy! What joy! Come — strike here! here! [*Pointing to her breast.*]

MANELICH [*terrified and weeping, he sinks into a chair*]. No! no!

MARTA. Oh, I cannot go on living so! I have been the most wicked woman in the world! And I cannot undo what I have done! Oh, that life — that past life — there is no power that can undo it! Come here — come here! Before — I couldn't tell you — but now you're going to kill me — I'll tell you all—all! [*Little by little she has won* MANELICH's *heart; he is seated in a low chair; she is on her knees and almost in his arms.*]

MANELICH. Tell me! Tell me!

MARTA. They have always treated me like the dirt under their feet! Oh, kill me!

MANELICH. I can't kill you, Marta — no, I can't! Because I love you — and I've loved you — ever since up there! I was a lump of snow — and I melted when I saw you! And a few days ago — when I came down from the mountains to marry you — I came leapin', like the water that leaps down to run into the ocean. They say the ocean is bitter! Well, let it be so! I love you — I don't know why! Perhaps because you've deceived me, or because I've

felt your warm blood on my hand! Because I've breathed the breath from your lips, and the fragrance of your hair! I only want to kiss you, to hold you in my arms — tight — tight — till life is confounded in death — like a man — and like a beast — man and beast together — and with you — and against you — and against the world —— [*He looks suddenly at the curtain as though remembering the light, and bears her in the opposite direction.*] Now let them come and take her from me! Let them come! Let them come!

MARTA. O Heavens!

MANELICH [*trying to kiss her*]. Marta!

MARTA [*she escapes from him*]. No! No!

MANELICH [*pursuing her*]. Marta!

MARTA. No! Forgive me this way — no! I don't want you to forgive me this way! You don't know all! But you must know all — and from me!

MANELICH. Yes, all! But not down here, Marta! The sky is black with all this misery! God doesn't see you when you speak!

MARTA. Well, up there, then — and now!

MANELICH. Yes, let us go! Up there everything is forgiven and nothing is corrupted. Even the dead

are preserved in the snow. Listen, Marta — and the souls ——

MARTA. Oh, let us go! Come, let us go! [*They start to go out.*]

MOSÉN *enters.*

MOSÉN. What's the news?

MARTA [*shrinking back*]. Mosén! Holy Virgin!

MANELICH. You come at a good time! The news is this: Tell the master the mill is there — and many thanks — and — that is all. No, listen! That I take what is mine. Come, Marta!

MOSÉN [*mystified*]. And what is it you are taking?

MANELICH. I just told you — Marta!

MARTA. Yes, yes ——

MOSÉN [*to* MARTA]. You can tell all this to the master. He's here.

MARTA. O God have mercy! Come, Manelich!

SEBASTIÁN *enters smiling.*

SEBASTIÁN. Oh, you are here! [*To* MOSÉN.] She didn't even come to meet me! [MARTA *shrinks away in horror.*]

MOSÉN. No.

MARTA [*to* MANELICH]. Don't leave me!

SEBASTIÁN [*contentedly*]. Marta! It's all settled — do you hear? The wedding! Her father will arrive to-night. [*To* MOSÉN.] You can imagine what for — to look over the land. But what's the matter here? [*Indicating* MARTA.]

MOSÉN [*grinning*]. Ask her.

MANELICH. I will tell him! [*To* SEBASTIÁN.] I'm goin' back — up there — and Marta's goin' with me!

SEBASTIÁN [*going close to* MARTA]. Marta! What is he saying? Answer me! [*Catches her roughly by arm.*] Answer me!

MARTA [*doggedly*]. Yes! We're going — up there!

SEBASTIÁN. Marta! Marta! Are you crazy? [*Shakes her savagely by the arm.*]

MANELICH [*interposing*]. Master, see what you're doin' — it's Marta!

SEBASTIÁN. And what is that to you?

MANELICH. She is mine — she is my wife!

SEBASTIÁN [*sneeringly*]. Yours? Marta yours?

MARTA. Yes! I am!

SEBASTIÁN. Marta!

MARTA. I told you it was all over! [*She starts to go out with* MANELICH.]

SEBASTIÁN. Mosén, call the men, and turn this fellow out!

[MOSÉN *goes to the door and calls.*]

MANELICH. Why shall they turn me out? [*The men and women come in.*]

SEBASTIÁN. Because I am master here, as I have always been — your master, and their master, and hers! [*Pointing to* MARTA.]

MARTA. Don't listen to him, Manelich! Come! Let us go!

MANELICH. Come! [*They start to go out.*]

SEBASTIÁN. Ah! you'll take her, will you? Take that, you dog! [*Strikes him.*]

MANELICH [*furiously*]. What! You strike me?

MARTA. Manelich! You let him strike you?

MANELICH [*weeping wildly*]. Oh! I shall go mad! Yes, he is the master! He is the master!

MARTA. Ah! The master! Listen, Manelich! This man you say is the master — *is the man* — do you understand?

MANELICH. Sebastián! Ah! [*He rushes at* SEBASTIÁN, *but is seized by the others and dragged toward the door.*]

MOSÉN. Out with him!

JOSÉ. He would kill the master!

MANELICH [*struggling*]. Blood! blood! I want blood ——

SEBASTIÁN. Don't let him go!

MANELICH. I want your life — your life — I want it!

SEBASTIÁN [*tauntingly*]. Marta is mine!

MARTA. Manelich!

MANELICH. You lie — you lie — Marta is not yours — she's mine — and you'll be mine — I'll have you yet — I'll have you yet! [*He is cast out by the men;* MARTA *attempts to follow, but* SEBASTIÁN, *with sinister smile, bars her way.*]

ACT III

ACT III.

SCENE: *The same.*

TIME: *Sunset of the same day.* JOSÉ *and* NANDO *are discovered: they are talking slowly and seem much depressed.*

JOSÉ. I don't feel right, Nando! [*He puts his hand on his heart.*]

NANDO [*nodding toward house*]. Speak low, man! Marta'll hear you!

JOSÉ. We've done a bad thing, Nando, a bad thing.

NANDO [*raising his voice*]. That's so — we have! I don't see how we can ever hold our heads up again!

JOSÉ. Don't yell so, man! Don't you know Marta's restin'?

NANDO. We did wrong to throw Manelich out.

JOSÉ. I know we did! But what we've got to do now is to keep quiet. We did what we did — well, because we did. If we hadn't separated them, Manelich would have killed Sebastián!

NANDO. Oh! Separate them — yes; but we shouldn't have thrown Manelich out like a dog. That was takin' him away from his wife, and in a bad way, too. I tell you I'm not on Sebastián's side any longer; and when I see him, I'm goin' to talk very plain to him.

JOSÉ. You're right! So am I! And if he doesn't like it, why, he needn't.

NANDO. He's out there now, isn't he?

JOSÉ. Yes! He's walkin' up and down with Mosén. [*Putting his hand to his mouth and lowering his voice.*] And he looks worried.

PELUCA *enters out of breath.*

PELUCA. Oh! How I did run!

NANDO. What have you been runnin' for?

PELUCA. And now the master says I'm slower than an ox; that he could have gone faster himself.

JOSÉ. Where did the master send you?

PELUCA [*putting finger to lip*]. Don't tell anybody! He sent me to tell the guards that he had turned a man named Manelich into the street; for them to look out for him, and keep an eye on him; because when we were turnin' him out he swore he would kill the master. Well, I've done what the master told

me to! I told the guards I heard Manelich swear he would kill him.

JOSÉ. You told the guards that?

PELUCA. Yes!

NANDO. You're a lost man! Don't you know you'll be called as a witness?

JOSÉ. Of course you'll be called! And you'll have to swear before an image! And if you stumble or choke even you'll be sent to prison!

PELUCA. Well, I told them you were both there, and that you heard him, too!

NANDO. Don't bring me into it!

JOSÉ. I was not there! Do you understand?

PELUCA. Hens! Worse than hens! Well, I was not there, either!

PEPA [*coming from within*]. Don't yell so! Marta's restin'!

NANDO [*lowering his voice*]. How is she?

PEPA. I don't know! I ask her, and she begins to cry, and then in a second she is like a tigress; she frightens me; but she doesn't speak a word.

JOSÉ. And how do you believe it will all end?

PEPA. How do I know?

NANDO. If I'd been you, I would have asked Marta ——

PEPA [*angrily*]. Haven't I told you I did ask her, and she wouldn't answer me?

ANTONIA [*coming from within*]. Who is that screamin' so?

JOSÉ. Antonia, come here! What do you think of all this?

ANTONIA. What do I think? I think it's all settled! Haven't they turned Manelich out? Well, Marta will go back to Sebastián, as she was before. And Manelich will go back to his goats, as he was before. And everything will be as it was before.

PEPA. Don't be foolish, Antonia! Marta will never go back to Sebastián! I'm sure of it! As for Manelich, when they turned him out he shouted at the top of his voice that he'd kill the master. Everybody knows that!

PELUCA. We don't know anything about it!

NANDO. We didn't hear anything!

PEPA. I'm goin' back to Marta. Perhaps she'll say something.

JOSÉ. Hush! Here comes Sebastián!

NANDO. I'll pretend I'm absent-minded.

ANTONIA. I'm goin'. [*Goes toward* MARTA'S *room.*]

SEBASTIÁN *enters.*

SEBASTIÁN. Antonia!

ANTONIA. I'm goin' to stay with Marta.

SEBASTIÁN [*angrily*]. Did you hear me call you? Come here! [ANTONIA *approaches reluctantly.*] How is she?

ANTONIA. She's lyin' down — and she's cryin'.

SEBASTIÁN. Tell her to come here — and be quick about it!

ANTONIA. I'm goin'! [*She goes in.* SEBASTIÁN *takes a seat apart without noticing the others.*]

SEBASTIÁN [*aside*]. And the father of the other one coming to-night, eh! It will be just my luck to have everything ruined by that clown! [*Raising his voice as though discovering the others.*] Oh, you're here, are you? You see how this Manelich has acted, do you, after I saved him from starvation? That's what one gets for showing favours to a beast!

NANDO. It doesn't do to show favours!

JOSÉ [*to* NANDO]. I thought you said you were goin' to talk plain to him!

NANDO. Yes, and you said you would!

JOSÉ. Well, I did say so, and you'll see!

SEBASTIÁN [*aside*]. She is worse than he is! For after all — Manelich — [*he makes a contemptuous gesture*] — but Marta — curse her!

José. Master!

Sebastián [*striking the table with his fist*]. What?

José [*frightened*]. Nothin'! I didn't say anything!

Sebastián. You are all witnesses — [*laughing*] — he said he would kill me. You heard him. Isn't it so?

Peluca [*indicating the others*]. They say they heard him!

Nando [*also indicating the others*]. They heard him — yes!

José. I — I — some days I'm pretty deaf.

Sebastián [*ignoring them*]. She won't come, eh? She disobeys me!

Nando [*to* José]. You're afraid!

José. You'll see! And then it'll be your turn! [*Approaching* Sebastián.] Master!

Sebastián. Well, what is it?

José. Why — er — Manelich — he seems to be plucky — eh, master? Plucky, isn't he?

Sebastián [*furiously*]. Plucky? He's a dog and a beast!

José. That's it — that's what I meant — yes!

Nando [*stepping forward*]. Now it's my turn! [*Aloud.*] Well, I say Manelich ——

Sebastián. What?

NANDO. Well, I say just what my brother said; and what my brother said I'll stand by; yes, he's a dog and a beast, and nothin' less.

SEBASTIÁN. Well, leave me! [*Calling.*] Marta!

JOSÉ. When I once get started ——

NANDO. Well, and when I get started, I don't take a back seat for anybody!

SEBASTIÁN. I'll not wait any longer! [*Calling.*] Marta!

PEPA [*appearing at door*]. Marta cannot come.

SEBASTIÁN. She must come!

PEPA. The poor thing is all upset, she's very weak from cryin', and she doesn't want to come — there!

SEBASTIÁN. She shall be made to come!

PEPA. Master! [ANTONIA *appears at the door.*]

SEBASTIÁN. Yes, and quickly, too! In with you and bring Marta here!

[ANTONIA *and* PEPA *start to go in, talking excitedly.*]

JOSÉ [*to* NANDO]. We'd better be going.

NANDO. That's what I say.

[*They go out.*

PEPA *and* ANTONIA *still linger at door, protesting to* SEBASTIÁN.]

SEBASTIÁN [*aside*]. They're all against me!

MOSÉN *enters.*

MOSÉN. Well, here I am!

SEBASTIÁN. What now? Have you been to the house?

MOSÉN. Yes, and there is the devil to pay there!

SEBASTIÁN. What! Something else? I shall go mad!

MOSÉN. The father has arrived.

SEBASTIÁN. Damn the old man!

MOSÉN. Shall we go to the house?

SEBASTIÁN. I'll go — later. For me, Marta comes before everything else in the world.

MOSÉN. It doesn't seem possible, Sebastián — what you used to be, and what you are!

SEBASTIÁN [*impatiently*]. Go! Leave me! leave me!

MOSÉN. Blind — worse than blind! The old man suspects everything: that Marta's wedding was a farce; that you turned Manelich out because you were jealous of him. Sebastián! Sebastián! He says he will break off the wedding. If he comes here you are lost.

SEBASTIÁN [*changing his tone*]. Come, come! Let us go!

MOSÉN. Thank God! [*Calling.*] Hello there!

JOSÉ *and* NANDO *come in.*

SEBASTIÁN. You will stay outside and keep an eye on the mill. No one is to come in, no one is to go out. Do you understand?

[*They nod assent.*]

MOSÉN. Let us go!

SEBASTIÁN. Yes, let us go. But I'll come back if I lose everything — I'll come back.

MOSÉN. Be careful! Morrucho is still here, and was seen with Manelich. He has been prowling about the mill. If you come here, he will tell Manelich, and — well, you know what he threatened.

SEBASTIÁN. What do I care? I'll come back!

[SEBASTIÁN *and* MOSÉN *go out, as* JOSÉ, NANDO, PELUCA, *and the women enter.*]

NANDO. It seems as though the master's going out of his senses.

ANTONIA *comes from within.*

ANTONIA. Leave her, Pepa! Leave her! I'm not goin' to stay with her any longer!

PEPA [*coming from within*]. What a look she has on her face! Why, how dark it is! [*She lights a candle at the fireplace.*]

JOSÉ. What's up? Won't she come out?

ANTONIA. No, she won't — and she won't!

PEPA. I'll not put up with her nonsense any longer! She takes no notice of us! Why should we stay?

ANTONIA. That's so! Let's all go home!

JOSÉ [*mysteriously*]. We mustn't move from here till Sebastián comes.

[NURI *is heard weeping in the distance.*]

NANDO. Hark! There's somebody cryin' ——

JOSÉ. It's Nuri!

NURI *enters, crying.*

NURI. I'm tired of stayin' alone! I don't want to stay in the house all alone!

PEPA. Come here, child.

JOSÉ. I don't blame you, Nuri.

NURI. You never think of me; it was so dark — awful dark — and I was scared — oh, it frightens me yet — to think how scared I was. And when I was runnin', I thought somebody was after me. [*She looks over her shoulder.*] Oh, how I did run and

how tired I am! [*Ends by laughing through her tears.*]

PEPA. Hush and get your breath, child!

NURI. I can't hush, because I have to tell you what happened.

JOSÉ. Well, what happened?

NURI. You'll see! [*In mysterious tone.*] I was gettin' supper for you, and I had put the pot to boil — when all of a sudden I heard a deep voice — but very deep — that came from, I don't know where — "Nuri! Nuri!!" Such a voice! It sounded as though it came out of the ground! I prayed to the Virgin, and she gave me strength to shut the door. But I still heard the voice in the distance — "Nuri! Nuri!" I thought if it wasn't a soul in torment, it must be Manelich calling, "Nuri! Nuri!" Ugh! It makes me shiver to think of it!

NANDO. And then what happened?

NURI. Nothing happened. Oh, yes — the pot cracked while it was boilin'! Would you believe it? When there was not a sound except the pot boilin', I was more scared than ever. I just couldn't stand it! So I began to sing as loud as I could, and opened the door and ran out, and I ran singin' all the way. Oh, that awful voice! "Nuri! Nuri!" And the

pot boilin' all alone — it was enough to scare anybody! [*Runs laughing, half-ashamed and hides her face on* ANTONIA'S *breast.*]

ANTONIA. What a child! She has scared me, too!

NURI [*leaving* ANTONIA]. Where is Marta?

ANTONIA. She's lyin' down.

NURI. Poor thing. [*She looks at each one in turn questioningly. They lower their eyes.*] Where is Manelich?

PEPA. I suppose he's in there.

NURI. Where?

NANDO. Why, inside there.

PEPA. He's probably asleep.

JOSÉ. Yes — asleep.

[*All look confused.*]

NURI. Why, how funny you act!

ANTONIA. Well, how do you want us to act, child?

NURI. Why don't you go home?

JOSÉ. Why, you see, Nuri, we're waitin' — we're waitin' ——

NANDO. For Sebastián, because he told us to stay here and watch ——

NURI. Watch what?

JOSÉ. Children shouldn't ask so many questions!

[*They all nod assent to this.*]

NURI [*beginning to cry again*]. I want to see Manelich! He isn't here! [*She starts to go within.*]

PEPA [*detaining her*]. Stop screamin'!

ANTONIA. Where are you goin'?

NURI [*stamping her foot*]. I want to see him! I want to see Manelich!

NANDO. Will you stop cryin'?

NURI. No, I won't stop cryin'. I know something awful has happened to Manelich!

PEPA. Don't scream so!

[*They try to quiet her.*]

NURI. I'm afraid he's dead — I'm afraid you've killed him!

JOSÉ. Don't be foolish, child! We haven't killed anybody! We've done nothin' but turn him out of the house — and now we wish we hadn't!

NANDO. Yes, and now we wish we hadn't!

NURI. Oh, I'm so glad! Why, then, he'll come back!

JOSÉ. What is she sayin'?

NURI. I'll go and tell him to come back!

NANDO [*taking her by arm*]. The master doesn't want him to come back.

NURI [*resisting*]. Let me go! Let me go!

MARTA [*calling from the door of her room*]. Nuri!

NURI [*running to her*]. Marta! oh, Marta!

MARTA [*appearing in door and embracing* NURI]. Nuri! [*She comes forward leaning on* NURI.]

NURI. Poor Marta! Do you know about Manelich? They've turned him out — they're turned him out as if he was nobody.

MARTA. I know, Nuri, I know! Help me to walk, dear!

PEPA. We'll help you.

MARTA. No! Don't touch me!

JOSÉ. Why, we — you know we only obeyed orders.

MARTA [*weeping*]. Yes, I know — you only obeyed orders — hating me — laughing at Manelich — you only obeyed orders! What harm has Manelich ever done you?

NURI. Don't cry, Marta! [*Wipes her own eyes and then* MARTA'S.]

MARTA. And now why don't you want Nuri to call him? What harm is there if she calls him? I want to go with him — with my husband, up there — where there are no people — where there is no one to laugh at us. And when we reach the highest peak, if we still hear you laughing, we'll go higher yet; and when we come where God

is, no one will laugh at us— for there are love and forgiveness.

NANDO. I believe she's right!

PEPA [*to the others*]. I don't see why you did what you have done.

PELUCA. Poor thing!

NURI [*weeping*]. You see, Marta! They're all nearly cryin'! They all love you! [*To the others.*] Don't you? Come with me, Marta, we'll find Manelich, and then you can go with him.

MARTA. Yes, yes — with him!

NANDO. But, you see — you mustn't do that.

JOSÉ. If it wasn't for Sebastián — but there's the trouble.

MARTA. You see, Nuri? They won't let me go!

NURI [*to the men*]. You're as mean as you can be, all of you! [*To* MARTA, *leading her aside.*] Come away, Marta!

NANDO. Well, I'm goin'! I can't stand this!

ANTONIA. Yes, let's all go!

JOSÉ. The master said we could watch outside.

PEPA. Let's go outside then.

NANDO. Marta, if you want to, you can shut the door. We won't trouble you!

[*All go out looking crestfallen.*]

MARTA. Don't leave me, Nuri!

NURI. No — I'll stay with you, Marta. Nobody loves you like Nuri. [*She smiles sadly and speaks as though addressing a child.*] Just you and me together. Do you want me to close the door?

MARTA. Yes, close it — close it!

NURI [*closing the door*]. There! Now what shall we do? Shall we talk about Manelich?

MARTA. Oh, Nuri! I shall die of terror! These walls — they seem falling on me — and behind them I see — Sebastián! I shut my eyes not to see him — and he is here — beside me — forcing me to go with him! Oh, no — no — not that! I must get out of here, Nuri! I must go to Manelich! I don't know where he is, but if I can only get out of here, I'll find him!

NURI. Oh, dear! I'm so mad with myself!

MARTA. Why, Nuri?

NURI. Because I don't know how I can help you to get out of here — right away — but right away!

MARTA. Yes, right away, Nuri, right away! If Sebastián comes! O God! don't let him come — don't let him come!

NURI. Oh, if I could only think of a way!

MARTA. They're all out there under the shed, watching, so I can't get away. Look, Nuri, and see if they are there?

[NURI *looks out and stamps with rage.*]

NURI. Yes, yes, they're all there! They've left a light near the gate, so they can see you if you go out.

MARTA. You see, there is no chance — none!

NURI. Wait! [*She thinks a moment and brightens quickly.*]

MARTA. What? What?

NURI. Kiss me, Marta. [*Kisses her.*] I have a plan. You shall get away!

MARTA. Nuri!

NURI [*as though talking to a child*]. There — there —— See how happy she is! You poor dear! [*Kissing her again.*]

MARTA. But Nuri — how, dear? They will see me!

NURI. Hush-sh-sh! Don't talk so loud when I tell you you're goin' to get away! And it's Nuri who's helpin' you! You'll tell Manelich that it was Nuri! Tell him I've thought about him, oh, so much, and that when he has a chance he is to send me word if he thinks about me! Oh, I'm so happy!

MARTA [*incredulously*]. But how, Nuri? How?

NURI. Listen! I'll go out, and when I go out, you shut the door. I'll go over there where they are, and begin runnin' about, and playin' with them. It's all dark out there. You put out the light. [*Beginning to laugh.*] Do you understand now?

MARTA. No, dear, no! Tell me again, Nuri!

NURI. Why, how stupid you are, Marta! When I'm playin' with them, I'll kick the light with my foot. It will fall over and go out, and the shed will be all dark. They will go in the mill to light it again and I'll follow them, laughin' and pushin' them, and then, you open the door and run.

MARTA. Oh, Nuri! Yes! Yes! Right away!

NURI. Well, now, I'm goin'; so be ready!

MARTA [*nervously*]. Wait! How shall I know when ——

NURI. That's so! How will you know? What a bother! [*Thinks intently.*] Oh, yes — I'll laugh once, very loud, and then you open the door.

MARTA. Yes — then I'll open the door! Oh, hurry, Nuri, hurry!

NURI. Kiss me!

MARTA. There — there! [*Kissing her repeatedly.*] God will bless you, dear child!

NURI. When I laugh loud!

MARTA. Yes, yes. [*She opens the door; voices are heard outside;* NURI *goes out.* MARTA *starts to close door;* NURI *puts her head in.*]

NURI. Don't forget to tell Manelich!

MARTA. No! No! [*Closes gate.*] How good she is! How good she is! Now I must wait — I must wait —— [*She snatches the handkerchief from her head.*] It seems hours already! [*Walks up and down in great agitation.*] Oh, Manelich! [*Pause.*] The light — I'd forgotten it! [*She blows out the candle at fireplace. The scene is lighted only by the fire.*] Now they won't see me when I open the door! Suppose I go that way! [*Indicating door leading within.*] No — they will be watching there, too — besides — who knows? Sebastián may come that way! Holy Virgin! No — no — Nuri's way is best! Oh God! I'm choking! I can't breathe! [*She sits down, rises hurriedly, and goes to the door.*] Listen — listen — I hear them — but not Nuri. Now — now — she is talking — but she doesn't laugh. Oh, why doesn't she laugh? Laugh, Nuri, laugh! O God, help us! [NURI'S *laugh is heard; then another, louder.*] Now! now! [*She opens the door, screams, and retreats.*] Ah!

SEBASTIÁN *enters muffled in a long cloak.*

SEBASTIÁN. Who's there?

MARTA [*in a low, frightened voice*]. Ah! Sebastián!

SEBASTIÁN. Who's there? Oh! is it you? Where were you going?

MARTA [*aside*]. God help me!

SEBASTIÁN [*catching her by the arm*]. Do you hear? Where were you going? Answer me! Where were you going at this hour of the night?

MARTA [*trying to escape*]. Let me go!

SEBASTIÁN. How you tremble! You're half dead from fear! [*He pushes her from him scornfully.*]

MARTA [*aside*]. Oh, if I could only die now!

SEBASTIÁN. Take off that handkerchief — it betrays you! Ah, ha! So you were running away!

MARTA. Yes, I was — and no one shall stop me!

SEBASTIÁN [*gloatingly*]. That's the way I like you — yes — like that — like that!

MARTA. Let me go!

SEBASTIÁN [*laughing satirically*]. Let you go! Let you go!

MARTA. Don't laugh at me, Sebastián!

SEBASTIÁN. Don't laugh at you? What shall I do, then? Tear you to pieces and trample you under foot? No, no! Better to laugh at you!

MARTA. Leave me, or kill me!

SEBASTIÁN. Let you go, eh? Or go myself? Or kill you? [*He goes to the door, shuts and bolts it.*]

MARTA [*following him*]. No! no!

SEBASTIÁN. Now we're alone — shut in here — you and I! The world ends here for us — and all that's in the world — the earth — the sky — everything is here!

MARTA [*shrinking away in horror*]. O God!

SEBASTIÁN. Now tell me — why you have turned against me in this way? You who ought to thank me!

MARTA. Oh, infamous! What have I to thank you for? That you have dragged me in the dirt — made me an outcast before God — and now that you let me live, only to make me viler than I was before? Oh, you coward — I hate you — coward — coward!

SEBASTIÁN [*in supplicating tone*]. Marta! No! no! don't say that! Don't say you hate me!

MARTA. Yes, I hate you!

SEBASTIÁN [*seizing her and placing his hand over her mouth*]. Hush! hush! You love me — you shall love me! I have sacrificed everything for you! I suffered like one of the damned when I gave you to that man! Don't tell me you love him — no — not

that! [*He sinks into a chair by the table, his head in his hands.*]

MARTA. Will it pain you to know I love Manelich? O God, I thank Thee for giving me one moment's happiness! Yes, I love him — with all my heart — with all my blood — with all my life — I love him!

SEBASTIÁN [*rushing at her*]. Stop! Stop ——

MARTA. I'll say it till you choke me! It's the only thing I've ever been able to say without shame!

SEBASTIÁN. Stop, I tell you! [*Threatening her.*]

MARTA [*as though remembering*]. I must defend myself — for him — only for him! Marta is nothing — but the wife of Manelich — yes!

SEBASTIÁN. You meant to ruin me, and you've done it — you've done it! Because I wouldn't leave you — and I won't leave you — with that man, whose name sets me on fire!

MARTA [*stopping her ears with her fingers*]. I won't listen!

SEBASTIÁN. You were mine — you are mine — you shall be mine!

MARTA. May the earth open and swallow me first!

SEBASTIÁN. May it open and swallow us both! We'll go to hell together! [*He seizes her in his arms.*]

MARTA. Let me go! Manelich!

SEBASTIÁN. Be careful!

MARTA. Manelich!

SEBASTIÁN [*forcing her within*]. You'll come with me!

MARTA. If you kill me first — yes!

SEBASTIÁN [*laughing brutally*]. I won't kill you!

MARTA. No — no —— [*She struggles to escape, catches at the table, then at the wall.*]

SEBASTIÁN. That's the way I like you, when you're furious!

MARTA. Let me go! [*She frees herself.*]

SEBASTIÁN. Be careful, or I'll get angry.

MARTA. I wish I could kill you! If you come near me, I'll scratch you — I'll spit on you! You're very brave with me! You wouldn't be with Manelich!

SEBASTIÁN. With you, and with him, and with both of you!

MARTA. No, don't touch me! Manelich!

SEBASTIÁN. Ah! [*He catches her by the throat.*]

[MANELICH *tears the door-curtain aside and stands peering in.*]

MARTA. Manelich!

MANELICH [*advances and takes her in his arms*]. Marta!

SEBASTIÁN [*wildly*]. How did you get in here?

MANELICH. I came the way you used to come — by your door — of master and thief! I waited for you — I followed you — I climbed the wall — with my nails — and with my teeth — and I'm here — and we're alone ——

SEBASTIÁN. Begone with you or I'll ——

MANELICH [*to* MARTA, *and laughing ferociously*]. Begone! He thinks he is still master! Marta — he thinks so — that I must bear it all! [*Turning to* SEBASTIÁN.] No, no. I am master now!

SEBASTIÁN [*starting to go out*]. You master? We'll see!

MARTA [*in warning voice*]. Manelich!

MANELICH [*interposing*]. No — coward! I tell you we're alone — you and I! I come for her — she is mine! And I come for you — for I'm goin' to kill you!

SEBASTIÁN. Me? You kill me?

MANELICH. You! You!

SEBASTIÁN. I, too, can kill men!

MANELICH. And I wolves! There you have

Marta! Do you want her? There she is — we'll fight for her! [MANELICH *draws his knife.*]

SEBASTIÁN. I have no knife!

MANELICH [*throwing the knife away*]. I don't need it!

MARTA. What have you done?

MANELICH. Now we're equal! What are you waitin' for?

SEBASTIÁN. You'll see! [*He runs to seize the knife;* MANELICH *intercepts and clinches with him;* SEBASTIAN *is erect when they come together.*]

MARTA. Ah!

MANELICH. You wanted the knife — coward! [*He seizes* SEBASTIÁN *by the throat.*]

SEBASTIÁN. Curse you!

MANELICH [*choking him*]. Die! Die!

MARTA. My God! My God!

MANELICH. Wretch! Coward! Wolf!

MARTA [*falling on her knees*]. Holy Virgin!

MANELICH. Die! Die! Die! [*Holding him by the throat at arms' length.*] Die with your face to her! [*He casts him at* MARTA'S *feet.*]

MARTA. Merciful Christ! [*She rises in horror.*]

MANELICH. There you have him! [*He runs to door and opens it.*] Come in — all of you!

[*The men and women crowd in.*]

NANDO. What has happened?

MANELICH. Your master called you!

JOSÉ [*bending over* SEBASTIÁN]. Dead!

PEPA. Dead!

MANELICH. Laugh — laugh all of you! We're leavin' the lowlands!

MARTA [*running to him*]. Yes, yes — take me — quickly!

MANELICH. Make way there! I killed the wolf! [*He points to* SEBASTIÁN.] I killed the wolf! [MANELICH *encircles* MARTA *with his right arm, and looks into her face; she returns his look, trembling, terrified; with a powerful sweep of the left arm, he points to the mountains;* MARTA *nods assent; they go out quickly, the people falling back to make way for them.*]

CURTAIN.

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